

# DIAMOND~DICK

BOYS BEST

## JR. WEEKLY JR.

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 291.

Price, Five Cents.

### DIAMOND DICK'S MID-AIR FIGHT

OR  
AT ODDS WITH THE CIRCUS CROOKS



THE 'DIAMOND DICK' HERE

IT WAS A HIGH OLD TIME ALL AROUND, AND LIVELY ENOUGH, TOO, WHILE IT LASTED.



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## DIAMOND DICK'S MID-AIR FIGHT;

OR,

### At Odds With the Circus Crooks.

By the author of "DIAMOND DICK."

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE FLIM-FLAMMERS.

"Here is the situation," said old Diamond Dick, lighting a cigar and tilting back in his chair. "There was a show in Ouray yesterday——"

"Well, rather," struck in Two-Spot Peters, with a chuckle. "What do you think Dutchy here tried to do in order to get us both in for two-bits?"

"I tell you dot," spoke up Fritz Dunder, observing how the old veteran tolerated the interruption and smiled at the New York kid. "Doo-Shpot und I bought vone dicket, oondershtand? Den I dook Doo-Shpot my pack on und carried him py'der door yet."

"What kind of a fool break was thet?" asked Handsome Harry.

"Schust linden vonce. Der man on der door he say 'Here, you only got vone dicket alretty!' und I

say, 'Sure?! don'd dot dicket say admit bearer? Und ain't I a bearer?'"

Fritz threw himself back in his chair and haw-haw'd until he broke one of his galluses.

"Did it get you in?" smiled young Diamond Dick.

"You can bet your wad it got us in," answered the Bowery boy; "it got us into more trouble than we knew how to handle. The man on the door did some swift work with his lunch-hooks and Fritz and I went over the ropes before you could bat an eye. We saw the show-but we had to go down in our kick and bring up the price of another ticket."

"Go on, Dick," said Handsome Harry, turning to the old veteran. "I got a feelin' in my bones thet ye've staked out a purty fair-sized bunch o' trouble fer this combine, an' the feelin' has been with me ever sence ye sent thet wire ter Bertie fer him, an'



me, an' the kids ter meet ye hyer in Tough-Nut. The quicker ye kin put us next the better I'll like it."

"Some one connected with that show left several hundred in counterfeit money in Ouray," the veteran resumed.

"Himmelblitzen!" exclaimed the German boy, jerking off his hat and pulling a five-dollar bill out from under the sweat-band. "Dere iss some of id."

"Where did you get this, Fritz?" inquired Diamond Dick, smoothing out the five on his knee, and looking at it.

It was a very poor counterfeit; but in a country where silver and gold were most in use, paper money could be pretty poor and yet escape detection.

"I caught a feller vat vas vorkin' a shell-game," explained Fritz. "'Two for vone, den for fife, dwendy for den,' he say, schust like dot, und he vould shuffle der shells aroundt like I can't dell. I put me oop doo tollars und fiddy cents, by shinks, und I vin und he pays me dot fife."

"He keeps the two-fifty in good money an' hands you out the bogus fiver," supplemented Harry.

"Dot's vat he did; und ven der peoples aroundt saw how I beat der game, a lot more beat der game schust like me. I can beat any game vat I efer see," and Fritz slapped his chest and looked so proud of himself that the New York kid almost tumbled off his chair.

It would have been no earthly use to explain to Fritz that, in beating the shell-worker, he had really beaten himself and traded two and a half in good money for a five that was bad. But that was the way of it.

"There are more men besides the shell-workers engaged in shoving that queer," said Diamond Dick, reflectively. "I am sure of that by the extensiveness of the operations. The show was in Pick-Me-Up the day before it was in Ouray, and the sheriff at Pick-Me-Up wired the sheriff at Ouray to be on the lookout for the flim-flammers. But the message from Pick-Me-Up did not reach Ouray until the show had left for this town of Tough-Nut. Keever, the Ouray

sheriff, jumped on the morning train and came down here and met me. Keever was in an awful stew because he was needed to chase a gang of horse thieves who had run off stock in the western part of the county; so I told him that I and my pards would look after these circus crooks and that he could go after the horse thieves. That was the reason I wired you to come here and meet me at this hotel. These flim-flammers must not be allowed to get out of Tough-Nut."

"We'll put a hectic flush all over 'em!" declared Handsome Harry.

"We can go at the job hammer-and-tongs," continued the veteran, knowing the old Serpent's propensity for rough and tumble. "The first hint these crooks get that we're after them will cause them to take to flight."

"Have you a plan, Diamond Dick?" asked Bertie.

"Yes."

The veteran took from his pocket a copy of the *Pick-Me-Up Howler*, opened it out and read as follows:

"'Wanted: A couple of A 1 kinkers. Apply at the ticket-wagon of the Great Consolidated Shows, Friday at Ouray, or Saturday at Tough-Nut.'"

"What's that got to do with it?" queried Handsome Harry.

"I want Fritz and Two-Spot to apply for these two jobs."

"Ach, du lieber!" exclaimed Fritz, rolling his eyes. "Vat iss dot—dot kinker pitzness?"

"You have to do the ground and lofty," explained Two-Spot, his eyes brightening with the prospect of excitement.

"Moukey-doodle pitzness on der trapeze?" faltered Fritz.

"Spring-board work, I take it."

"I bed you I preak meinseluf in doo at dot kind of vork."

"If you're getting cold feet, Fritz," flared the New York kid, "I'll tackle the proposition all by my lonesome."



"Nix, Doo-Shpot; I go along mit you all der same."

"Your engagement with the Great Consolidated will be short," Diamond Dick went on. "If you are hired, you will be in a position to look around and size up every one connected with the lay-out."

"What part o' the job hev ye sawed off fer Bertie an' me, Dick?" asked Handsome Harry.

"You two will have a roving commission. Go to the show this afternoon, keep your eyes open, and keep in touch with the boys. I cannot join you until late in the day, as there is some railroad business to take my attention. But I will be on hand in a few hours—before any excitement is turned on, I hope."

The veteran turned to the boys.

"It is nearly noon," he said, "and from the sounds I hear out in the street the parade must be passing. Now is a good time for you to present yourselves at the grounds and apply for the positions. Better take this paper with you."

"On the fly," returned Two-Spot.

"So kevic like noddings," added Fritz.

The New York kid took the paper which Diamond Dick handed to him and hurried from the room, followed by the Dutch boy.

Then the veteran got up and, accompanied by the young sport and the old Serpent, passed to a window overlooking the street.

A blare of music came from below, and they saw a weather-beaten band wagon with six musicians.

Behind the wagon came half-a-dozen men and women, riding two abreast and decked out in tawdry finery; behind them rolled a dozen or more cages.

One of the cages was open, and within were two fierce-looking Bengal tigers leaping and snarling about a young woman who was sitting, calm and fearless, on a chair in the center of the den.

An exclamation escaped the young sport's lips.

The tiger-tamer was exceedingly beautiful, and Handsome Harry thought, for a moment, that to this fact alone was due the young sport's remark, in undertone.

"Look!" muttered Diamond Dick, Jr., laying a quick hand on Harry's arm.

"At the gal?" returned the old Serpent.

"No; at that man riding beside the cage."

Bertie pointed to a man, on a white horse, rather flashily dressed, and riding abreast of the open cage.

The man's face, as Bertie spoke, was turned toward the girl on the other side of the bars.

He said something to the girl and she flashed a disdainful look at him and averted her eyes.

The man looked away, an angry expression on his face, and Handsome Harry was able to see him to advantage.

"Catamounts an' hyeners!" he exclaimed. "Ef it ain't Clancy, I'm a Piegan!"

"Who is Clancy?" inquired the veteran.

Before either the young sport or the old Serpent could reply, the flashily-dressed man raised his eyes upward to the hotel window.

The recognition, so far as he and Bertie and Harry were concerned, appeared to be mutual.

The anger on Clancy's face gave way to surprise and consternation, and then he lowered his eyes swiftly and spurred rapidly on.

"He was one of Red Ferg's gang, Diamond Dick," said the young sport.

"No discount on thet!" growled Handsome Harry.

"How do you know?" came from Diamond Dick.

"We saw him in the pit under the mountain," went on young Diamond Dick, "when we fought our way up the stairs and met Red Ferg at the entrance, just under the idol of Tlaloc. Clancy was the man who set off the blast and sealed up the pit for all time."

"I thought that those who were closed up in the pit had escaped by way of the river and gone into Mexico?"

"That's what Naylor, the Secret Service man, thought; but Clancy, it appears, has joined this show and is taking his chances in remaining north of the Rio Grande. I'll bet a thousand to one that Clancy is one of the flim-flammers!"

"I thort we had seen the last o' him down thar in



thet pit," mused Handsome Harry, "but hyer he is, big as life an' twicet as ornery. Ef thet hombre had had his way, Dick, the son of his dad an' yer ole pard 'u'd never hev seen daylight arter bein' kerried inter thet thar pit."

"You are certain of the man, are you?" queried the old veteran.

"I could swear to it if I could only hear his voice," Bertie replied.

"Then here's something to go on, right at the start-off. After you and Harry eat your dinner, Bertie, you might proceed to the show grounds. Clancy seemed to recognize you and, if he did, and is really the person you think he is, he'll make it a point to keep out of your way. You will have to be tactful, for if Clancy thinks you are after him on account of this counterfeit game, he may round up the other crooks and skip before we have a chance to capture them."

Bertie assured the old veteran that he would be wary in his dealings with Clancy, and the three friends went down to dinner.

The meal over, the old veteran, the young sport and Handsome Harry separated, Diamond Dick going over toward the railroad offices, and Bertie and his old pard making for the show grounds.

The tents of the Great Consolidated had been pitched well on the outskirts of the little frontier city.

There were two large canvas structures connected at one side, one given over to the menagerie and the other reserved for the circus.

A horse tent was in the rear of the circus tent, a side-show tent stood in front, and to the left of the menagerie tent, and a "chuck" outfit lay well to the rear of the grounds.

It was a very early hour, and there was little doing.

A couple of watchmen were in evidence, but most of the employees of the show appeared to be in the "chuck" tent.

To the left of the side show, in a cleared space, a trench had been dug and roofed over.

One end of the trench, which was about fifteen feet

long, was open, and at the other end there was a barrel, with both heads knocked out, sticking up through the broken earth.

Spread out on the ground, close to the covered trench, was a huge balloon, with the words, "The Highflyer," painted on its wrinkled surface.

A thin little man, who looked like a Frenchman, was working on the balloon, and a score or so of small boys were watching him as he worked.

"I reckon thar's goin' ter be a balloon ascension," remarked the old Serpent.

"That comes off about five this afternoon," returned Bertie.

"I don't see any sign of our friend, the moonshiner."

"Nor I. We might mosey over toward the balloon and look on there for a while. Meantime Clancy may show himself."

"I wonder what luck the kids had in findin' a job?"

"The New York kid always succeeds at whatever he undertakes," replied Bertie, "and it's a safe-money break that he and Fritz are now a part of the Great Consolidated."

The course taken by the young sport and his old pard in making for the place where the balloon was spread out led them along the wall of the menagerie tent.

When they were about midway of the structure they came to an abrupt halt and exchanged expressive glances.

They had heard a voice from within the tent, a voice which rang familiarly on their ears and which each of them instantly recognized.

"Clancy!" muttered Handsome Harry.

"And some one else," whispered the young sport, taking a quick look around, "a woman, if the sound of the other voice counts for anything."

Finding that they were not observed by the one watchman, at that moment within sight, nor by any of those who were around the balloon, Bertie and Harry drew close to the tent wall.

"Look here, Millie," came the smooth, oily tones



of Clancy, "I'm not going to put up with any more nonsense at your hands. You know I like you—I've told you that more'n a dozen times——"

"I don't want you to like me, Jack Martin," the angry feminine voice broke in. "All I want you to do is to quit bothering me and attend to your own affairs."

"You needn't be so high and mighty! If you'll marry me, I'll——"

"Marry you! I'd kill myself first. Stand out of my way and let me pass."

"I'll do nothin' of the sort until I've had my say. It's that Ed Myrick you're struck on. But Ed'll never have you, mark that. You'll be mine or you'll be nobody's."

"Get out of my way, I tell you! I won't stand here and listen to such talk."

"Yes, you will, my beauty. And I'm goin' to have a kiss, here and now."

A smothered scream, at that instant, came from within the tent, instantly followed by a sound of quick movements and the clanging of an iron door.

"Now," panted the girl's voice, "come here if you dare!"

"Come out o' that cage, you spitfire," Clancy's voice returned, in tone of dire rage; "come out, I say, or I'll stir up them tigers so they kill you!"

Bertie thought it about time that he and Harry saw what was going on, so he jerked a knife from the breast of his coat and slashed a rent in the canvas wall.

When he and his old pard peered through the rent they saw a scene that made their blood run cold.

## CHAPTER II.

### MILLIE.

The young sport and the old Serpent had an unobstructed view of the little drama which was being enacted inside the menagerie tent, and, of course, what they had already heard had given them a pretty fair understanding of the present situation.

Clancy—for both Bertie and Harry were now sure

of the man—had announced himself as being in love with the girl, and she had valued his professions at what they were worth.

Like the villain that he was, Clancy was forcing his attentions upon the girl, and she, in order to escape him, had flung herself into the tigers' cage, which stood near at hand.

She was in the cage, peering through the bars at Clancy, when Bertie and Harry looked through the slit in the tent.

The two tigers, their eyes gleaming, were crouching to the floor back of the girl, lashing their tails around them and plainly working themselves up into a rage on account of the unwonted commotion.

To be successful, a wild-beast tamer must at all times have a calm eye and a confident and fearless air—something which the girl did not just then possess.

She was still clad in the costume she had worn during the parade, her face was pale, her bosom was heaving wildly, and she was trembling in every limb.

Clancy, worked up to a high pitch by the girl's actions, cherished designs which were little short of murderous; and in working out his designs fortune had seemed to favor him.

The tank in which the baby hippopotamus was wont to disport itself had sprung a leak that morning, and one of the all-around mechanics employed about the show had been working to mend the tank with a tinner's brazier and irons.

The "chuck" gong sounding before the tank had been entirely mended, the man had hurried away to eat his dinner and had left the brazier behind with the irons heating in the fire.

Clancy, oblivious of everything but his desire to play even with the girl who had spurned his love with contempt, had jerked one of the red-hot irons out of the brazier and was advancing with it upon the cage.

It was not necessary for him to announce his bloodthirsty intentions.

Nothing can excite or overawe a wild beast like fire, and even as the tigers looked at the glowing



iron they sprang up and began striking at the bars with their paws.

There was no one in the tent save Clancy and the girl, and the man evidently thought he would be able to have his own way.

The pallor in the girl's face deepened to the whiteness of death.

She reeled as she stood and was obliged to clutch the bars of the cage to save herself from falling to the floor.

"Back!" she whispered; "you will excite the brutes so that they will kill me!"

"Come out, then!" cried Clancy, waving the iron about his head: "Come out, I say, or I'll goad the beasts on so they'll rend you limb from limb! I'll teach you to set yourself up above me! Come out, if you want to save your life!"

The girl opened her lips to call for help, but no sound came.

Her eyes closed and she began slipping downward, finally falling backward across the floor of the cage, directly between the two tigers.

Beside himself with fury, Clancy leaped toward the cage to carry out his awful plans.

But Diamond Dick, Jr., followed by his old pard, had raised the bottom of the tent wall and darted inside, paying no heed to the warning shout from the watchman who had suddenly become aware of their presence.

"Drop that iron!" cried Bertie.

Clancy halted in confusion and half recoiled.

The next moment, with a muttered oath, he had struck at young Diamond Dick's face with the gleaming brand.

Had the blow landed the young sport's eye would have been put out, or, at the very least, his face would have been terribly disfigured.

But the blow did not land.

Bertie's right fist shot forth like lightning and the iron fell from Clancy's grasp.

"Take him in hand, old pard!" cried Bertie, whirling toward the cage to render what assistance he could to the girl.

One glance was all that was necessary to show the young sport that if the girl's life was to be saved no time was to be lost.

The tiger tamer still lay on the floor of the cage, as unconscious as when she had first fallen.

One of the tigers was leaping across and across her body, plunging furiously from one end of the cage to the other, showing its white, fang-like teeth and snarling and roaring.

The other tiger stood at the side of the girl, looking down at her, seemingly ready to pounce upon the white, shapely throat.

Had the girl made the slightest move, there is no doubt but that the brute would have seized her instantly.

The door of the cage, as Bertie could see, was not locked but simply secured with an iron catch.

The tiger tamer, in her haste to escape from Clancy, had not had time to lock the cage behind her.

Whatever was to be done must be done quickly, and the young sport sprang to the brazier and snatched out the other iron.

Then he leaped toward the cage door, but found the watchman barring his way.

"What are you goin' to do?" demanded the watchman.

The question was entirely unnecessary, and Bertie did not answer it.

"Out of my way!" he commanded, brandishing the hot iron.

"You'll be killed if you go into that cage!"

"The girl will be killed if I don't."

"You'll both be killed! Those tigers have killed two or three men already. Millie was the only person we've ever had who could manage the brutes, and now see how they're treating her! They——"

Bertie caught the watchman by the collar in angry impatience and flung him aside.

"Stand at the door and be ready to help," said he.

The next instant he had jerked open the door and jumped into the cage.

The girl was as yet unharmed, and Bertie's en-



trance into the den had caused both tigers to give him their attention.

Both of the animals, snarling viciously, lowered their crouching bodies to the boards beneath them.

"Look out!" yelled the watchman; "they're gettin' ready ter jump on ye! Back out while you've got time."

"Don't take any chances, son!" shouted Handsome Harry, gripping Clancy with his powerful right hand and sending his left to grope for a revolver.

Diamond Dick, Jr., was in awful peril and the old Serpent acted as one dazed.

But Bertie had no intention of beating a retreat until he had accomplished the work which took him into the cage.

He kept his eyes fixed upon the glittering, diamond-like orbs of the animal nearest him and which seemed the more dangerous of the two.

Suddenly he drew one of his revolvers and fired it into the bottom of the cage.

Frightened by the report, the nearest tiger flung itself to the opposite end of the den with a force that made the cage quiver in every part.

Then, without a waver, the young sport advanced upon the second brute, holding the red-hot iron in front of him.

The tiger stood its ground as though fascinated.

Bertie thrust the iron against the animal's muzzle; there was a hiss, a sickening smell of burning flesh, a roar of agony from the tiger and then the brute joined its mate at the other end of the cage.

Now was the young sport's opportunity, and he was not slow to take advantage of it.

Slipping his revolver into his pocket, he stooped, caught the girl about the waist and dragged her swiftly to the door, being careful the while not to turn his back on the tigers.

The watchman was ready, and flung the door open so that young Diamond Dick was able to spring out backward and drag the girl with him.

Instantly the door was swung shut, and immediately afterward the weight of both brutes was hurled simultaneously against that end of the cage.

"Rip an' tear, ye bloomin' varmints!" whooped the Serpent of Siskiyou, in a spasm of relief. "Ef I had my way I'd make lead mines out o' yer carcasses, thet's what I'd do!" He faced toward Diamond Dick, Jr. "Bertie, boy," said he, "ye done the job plum up ter the handle!"

Just then Clancy thought it advisable to make himself scarce and he tried it, but Harry was too quick for him.

"Nary, my festive tin-horn!" cried the Californian, giving Clancy a shake that made his teeth rattle. "Ye desurve the biggest lickin' ye ever got in yer life, an' I'll be only too glad ter give it to ye ef ye give me half an excuse."

The man calmed down for a minute; but only for a minute. Suddenly he left go with all his lung power.

"Hey, Rube!" he yelled; "hey, Rube!"

It was the showman's call for a scrap, and hardly had the yell ceased echoing through the big tent than the canvas wall was lifted on every side, and canvasmen, candy butchers, kinkers and others came flocking in, every man armed with a tent stake.

"Throw these duffers out!" roared Clancy; "kick 'em off the grounds!"

In vain was it for Bertie or Harry to protest, and little protesting did either of them attempt.

As the showmen rushed forward, Bertie gave a quick look around for the girl, but she had vanished.

A second more and there was a hand-to-hand fight at close quarters, stakes wildly waving, hoarse yells going up from a dozen throats, and clinched fists battering friend and foe indiscriminately.

"Wake up, snakes, an' sound rattles!" bellowed Handsome Harry, delighted at the prospect of a rum-pus. "Git together, crawlers, an' throw pizen! Ye're up ag'inst the son of his dad an' ther great an' only Sarpint of Siskiyou, an' ef we don't hev the lot o' ye lookin' two ways fer the trail out I ain't no good at prophesyin'!"

Backward, forward, sideways the young sport and his old pard fought their battle, always shoulder to shoulder.



They gave some pretty hard knocks, and they took not a few, but the odds were overwhelming and Diamond Dick, Jr., quickly saw that, if he and Harry were to escape with heads unbroken resort would have to be had to something besides bare fists.

The trend of battle had brought the two friends close to the large pole in the center of the tent.

"Back to back, old pard, with the pole between us!" panted Bertie. "Guns are trumps!"

"Keno, pardy!"

They whirled about, each with his back to the big pole, and their guns leaped into their hands and were brandished threateningly in the faces of their foes.

"Back!" shouted Diamond Dick, Jr. "What kind of a set-to do you call this? Five to one and tent stakes against bare fists? The first man that raises a club we'll pepper for his pains!"

"It's the son of his dad thet's torkin'," supplemented Handsome Harry, "an' ye kin bet a poncho thet what he says goes!"

A dozen men had executed the charge at the alarm of "Hey, Rube!" and of that dozen at least four were retired, suffering more or less from contact with the fists of the young sport and the old Serpent.

The remaining eight, awed by the display of weapons, retreated precipitately and came to a halt at a little distance.

While they stood, staring supinely into the pointed muzzles of the forty-fours, a dapper little man in a silk hat came hurrying in.

"What's the ruction here?" he cried, racing for the center pole. "What? Men with guns? Down with those weapons or I'll have you jailed. Slinger"—the dapper little man turned to the watchman—"go for the sheriff! I'll have these two rascals locked up. Egad, I'll find out whether my men are to be protected or not!"

"Just a moment, Mr. Forrest! Hear me before you send after the sheriff and cause these two gentlemen to be arrested!"

The girl was the speaker, and as she spoke she came hurrying in from the other tent.

"Why, Millie!" exclaimed Forrest. "What have you to do with this? What do you know about this trouble?"

"I know that I am the cause of it," the girl replied, "and I know that if it hadn't been for one of those gentlemen you think of having arrested I would have been torn to pieces by Lascar and Rajah."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Forrest, taking a pair of gold eyeglasses from his pocket and pinching them about his nose. He looked at Millie steadily for a moment. "Were you in the tigers' cage? Did you lose control over them?"

"I was driven into the tigers' cage by Jack Martin," the girl answered.

"Driven? I don't understand you."

"I reported Jack Martin to you once before, Mr. Forrest," Millie went on.

"I know," returned the showman, "and he promised me that he would do differently."

"Well, he hasn't done differently," returned the girl, in a bitter tone. "I had to spring into the tigers' cage to keep away from him. The tigers were excited, and Jack Martin made them more so by taking one of those hot irons from the brazier, there. I fainted, fell down inside the cage, and would have been killed but for that young man." Millie indicated Bertie. "He went into the cage at the risk of his life and dragged me out. Didn't he, Mr. Slinger?"

The girl appealed to the watchman, who had told her of Bertie's gallant exploit.

"That's what he did, Mr. Forrest," seconded the watchman.

"But what means this row here?" asked the perplexed showman.

"Martin sent up a yell of 'Hey, Rube!' an' the boys tumbled in," went on the watchman.

"What did Martin want a row for?"

"So he could get away," put in Millie.

"Isn't he here?"

"No, Mr. Forrest; he got away during the fight."

"I guess you needn't go for the sheriff, Slinger," said the proprietor of the Great Consolidated.

"I guess he needn't," guffawed Handsome Harry. "You'll hev ter be a hull lot smarter than ye are now ter git a sheriff in this man's town to lock up Diamond Dick, Jr."

"What!" exclaimed Forrest; "is this young Mr. Wade?"

"I am Bertie Wade," replied the young sport, who had two glances for Millie where he had one for the showman.

"We made a jump from Diamond Dick's town last night, but hadn't the pleasure of meeting either you or Diamond Dick, before we left Ouray."

"Diamond Dick was here in Tough-Nut," replied



Bertie, "and my old pard and I were out in the hills."

"You have been of great service to Miss Mowbray," went on Forrest, swelling up importantly, "and we thank you for it."

"I would prefer to have my thanks come from Miss Mowbray herself," said the young sport, turning to the girl.

A blush mantled Millie Mowbray's rounded cheeks as she stepped toward young Diamond Dick with outstretched hand.

"Mr. Slinger told me everything, Diamond Dick, Jr.," said the girl, prettily, "and I am very grateful to you."

"I suppose Ed Myrick will want to have a hand in thanking him for saving your life?" said Forrest. Myrick was the girl's sweetheart.

As he put the question, the young sport fastened his eyes admiringly on the girl's fair face.

"He will, certainly," said Millie, casting down her eyes. "He is in the ticket wagon."

The girl made a half motion as though she would lead Bertie outside, but he drew her back, still holding her small white hand.

"It isn't necessary for Mr. Myrick to thank me," said he; "the mere fact that I was able to save you from the designs of such a villain as this man, Clancy, is a sufficient reward."

"Clancy?" repeated Millie, her eyes opening wide.

"I mean Jack Martin."

Bertie drew Millie a little to one side where they would be out of earshot of those who were standing near.

"How long has this man Clancy, or Martin, as you call him, been with the show, Millie?"

To have the dashing young sport call her by her first name brought another vivid flush to Millie Mowbray's cheek.

"Only a week—Bertie." She flashed him a roguish glance as she spoke his name. "He joined the Great Consolidated in Las Tablas."

"What's his specialty?"

"I believe he advanced some money to Mr. Forrest, and has a part interest in the show. We had a run of hard luck, in Las Tablas, and if Jack Martin hadn't appeared and offered to put up some money, I'm afraid we should have gone to pieces."

"Ah!" exclaimed the young sport. "If that is true, then your speaking to Mr. Forrest of the way

Martin has treated you will not be of any avail. Mr. Forrest can do nothing."

"If Mr. Forrest doesn't do something to keep that man from persecuting me I shall leave the show!"

Millie's eyes flashed as she spoke, and there could be no doubting her determination.

"Bravo, little girl!" exclaimed Bertie. Then his own eyes flashed a little as he added: "Why doesn't this man Myrick do something to protect you?"

"Ed would do anything possible, but Martin is really one of his employers, so that very little can be done."

Diamond Dick, Jr., was beginning to form a very poor opinion of Ed Myrick.

"Doesn't Martin do anything about the show?" Bertie went on.

"Whenever he feels like it he works the shell game," replied Millie.

"Ah, I see!"

Bertie was now certain that Clancy, or rather Jack Martin, as the moonshiner chose to call himself, was one of the clique of flim-flammers.

The young sport would very much have liked to continue questioning the girl, but Forrest stepped up, at that moment, and tapped her on the shoulder.

"Time you were in the dressing-tent, Millie," said he.

"I'll see you again, Bertie," said the girl, as she flashed the young sport a smile and hurried away.

"Here's a reserved-seat ticket if you would like to see the show, Mr. Wade," said the proprietor, pressing a bit of pasteboard into Bertie's hand.

"Thank you," Bertie answered, as he put the ticket in his pocket and turned away.

Near the door he joined his old pard.

Harry was busily examining a playing card as Bertie stepped to his side.

"I was standing beside the wall of the tent, right over to the left, thar," the Californian explained, "when a hand was run through at the bottom of the canvas an' left this keerd almost under my bootsoles. It's the two-spot o' dimings, so I reckon I know who pushed it in."

The New York kid carried a supply of deuces with him.

Whenever he had a note to write to his friends he used the white side of the card and wrote between the pips.

In this way it was never necessary for him to sign



his name as the denomination of the card proved his identity.

"Look out for the geezer in the glad rags," read the writing on the card; "he's laying to make a raise and fly the coop."

"We'll go out and have a look for the geezer," said the young sport, and he and his old pard immediately left the menagerie tent.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A BLOW-UP.

"Thet New York kid must be on the inside," chuckled Handsome Harry.

"He's given us a little inside information, anyway," replied Bertie.

"Ye kin bet yer last soo markee thet he's the boy ter git next ter anythin' thet's doin'."

"I'm satisfied that Clancy is the leader of this gang of circus crooks," said the young sport, "and if we can get our hands on him again we'll show him the inside of the Tough-Nut lock-up."

"All he raised thet ruction fer was jest ter git away durin' the exeitement."

"And he succeeded pretty well," added the young sport.

Out in front of the main tent a band was playing and people were flocking to the show-ground from all directions.

All was noise and confusion, and men, women and children were scrambling to get to the ticket wagon and exchange their silver pieces for tickets.

Money was pouring into the wagon in a stream.

"This is a mighty good day fer the Great Consolidated," muttered Harry. "That man Forrest won't go broke in this town."

"It doesn't look like it, that's a fact," replied Diamond Dick, Jr.

In order that they might search the grounds to better advantage the two friends separated, Harry working off to the right and Bertie to the left, agreeing to meet in front again in half an hour.

There were a hundred places where Jack Martin could be secreted about the grounds, so young Diamond Dick was not greatly disappointed in his inability to find the fellow.

As he was working his way back toward the main entrance, where he was to meet Handsome Harry, Bertie saw that the balloon had been hoisted into an upright position with guy ropes and that a fire had

been built in the long trench preparatory to an inflation.

"Going to have an ascension?" Bertie asked of the little man who looked like a Frenchman.

"Zat ees ze intention," was the reply.

"I thought the ascension was to be at five o'clock?"

The man gave Bertie a sharp look and turned away, shrugging his shoulders.

Handsome Harry was waiting impatiently for the young sport when he got back to the main entrance.

"Ketch onter anythin', son?"

"Not a thing."

"Me, nuther. What's next on the docket?"

"Diamond Dick said we were to keep in touch with Two-Spot and Fritz, so I suppose we might as well go in and see the show."

They pushed into the stream of people, passed through the menagerie tent and were soon in the circus pavilion.

Presently they were seated and the show began with a grand entry of men and women mounted on horses.

Millie Mowbray was among the riders, looking even more entrancing than she did in the cage of tigers during the circus parade.

During the evolutions in the ring Millie caught sight of the young sport, and the vivid color rushed into her face.

"She's a mighty fine-lookin' gal, son," remarked Handsome Harry.

"One of the handsomest girls I ever saw," replied Bertie, and he said it in such a tone that the old Serpent cast a quick look at him and gave vent to a long whistle.

"Reckon she ort ter feel mighty grateful ter ye fer what ye done fer her, pardy."

"I presume she does; I was glad of the opportunity to be of service to her. She's in a mighty uncomfortable position in this show, Harry."

"How so?"

"Her lover is the ticket-seller, and, if I size him up correctly, he hasn't sand enough to call his soul his own," and the young sport went on to tell his old pard all that Millie had told him regarding Martin and Myrick.

While Bertie and Harry were talking, several acts in the ring slipped past them with only casual attention; but when the ringmaster led out a small, innocent-looking mule and offered \$5 to the person wh



could ride it, and when a familiar voice from the ringside responded, "Yah, dot's me, so kevic like nodding," the young sport and the old Serpent gave over their talk and focused their eyes on the tanbark.

Fritz Dunder lumbered heavily into the ring.

He wore only his ordinary costume, but the mere sight of him appeared to convulse the audience.

"What do you want here, my German friend?" inquired the ringmaster.

"I want to make fife tollars," responded Fritz.

"Do you think you can ride this mule?"

"Nix, I don'd dink anyding aboutd id. I can ride dot moo-el so easy as I can't dell."

"Well, get aboard."

It took Fritz some time to get aboard.

Every time he started toward the mule's head with the intention of mounting, the animal switched its business end around and shot out its hind hoofs.

"Why don't you get on?" inquired the ringmaster.

"V'y don'd he holt shtill mit himseluf?" retorted Fritz. "Sooch a moo-el I never saw yet."

The ringmaster beckoned some one from the ringside, and a man, with a bushy black full beard and wearing a blue uniform with tarnished gilt trimmings, stepped into the ring and held the mule's head.

This enabled Fritz to mount, and forthwith his troubles began.

The mule shot into the air and came down with a jolt that must have loosened every bone in the Dutch boy's anatomy; but Fritz, hanging to the animal's neck, simply let off a yell of defiance.

Then the mule began a series of bucking operations and splintered out into a sort of defective kine-tograph picture so that there seemed about half-a-dozen mules and a couple of dozen Fritzes.

As well might a person try to hang onto a streak of greased lightning as to cling to that plunging four-footed infernal machine.

The Teuton let go and went rocketing over the mule's head.

As the man with the bushy whiskers happened to be in the exact spot where fate had planned for Fritz to alight, there was a collision and the Dutch boy and the man went down in a tangled heap.

By a peculiar process of reasoning, the man with the bushy whiskers seemed to have the idea that Fritz had slammed into him on purpose, and Fritz had corraled the impression that the man with the

bushy whiskers was responsible for his flight through the air.

So the two had a give-and-take right there, and when the ringmaster called more of the ring attaches and had the boy and the man separated, Fritz was holding the bushy whiskers in his hand and the man stood revealed as Jack Martin!

"Hang onto the maverick, Fritz!" roared Handsome Harry, rising and leaping down the tier of seats, "we're arter the tin-horn. Gle-ory to snakes an' double-barreled surprises!"

Diamond Dick, Jr., was well in the lead of his old pard, and both were chasing toward the ring.

The merriment of the spectators had died down and given place to the wildest excitement.

The onlookers naturally had no idea who the man who had sported the layout of false whiskers could be, but they jumped at the conclusion that he must be crooked or he wouldn't be disguised.

The ringmaster and the two ring attaches who had separated Fritz and Martin confronted Bertie and Harry and disputed their passage.

"Go back and sit down!" cried the ringmaster, making a threatening gesture with his whip.

"Cl'ar the track, thet's my advise ter you," retorted Harry, jerking the whip from the ringmaster's hand.

Diamond Dick, Jr., flung one of the ring attaches to one side, and the old Serpent, laying about him with the whip, plunged on unhampered.

A clear stretch lay before the young sport and his old pard, but Jack Martin was too resourceful a villain to be captured so easily.

The instant he realized that he had been stripped of his disguise and recognized by Diamond Dick, Jr., and Handsome Harry, Martin sprang to the mule.

It was a trick mule, and could be ridden by any one who knew how.

Fortunately for Martin, he knew how.

Fritz, understanding what was expected of him by the old Serpent and the young sport, ran toward the mule's head.

A touch of the bridle by Martin and a pressure of his heels in the animal's flanks caused the mule to swing around and launch out his hind hoofs.

Fritz was caught in the shoulder and went backward, heels over head; then, at a gallop, Martin dashed from the ring into the dressing-room.

Bertie and Harry followed.



When they reached the curtain that hid the dressing-room entrance, Forrest appeared in front of them.

"What is the meaning of this?" cried the showman. "What! Is it you, Mr. Wade?"

"The meaning is," Bertie retorted, as he flung past the proprietor of the Great Consolidated, "that you're liable to get yourself into hot water for shielding a criminal."

The mule was found in the men's quarters of the dressing-room, but Jack Martin was not in evidence.

"What became of Jack Martin?" Bertie demanded of several acrobats who were standing around.

Every man in the lot protested that he had not seen Jack Martin.

"Tell thet ter the marines!" fumed Handsome Harry. "Martin rode in hyer on thet mule an' ye must hev seen him."

Handsome Harry was mad as a hornet and the prospects, at that juncture, were very promising in favor of a set-to.

Something, however, occurred to prevent a conflict.

A chorus of feminine screams came from behind the partition on the side of the women's dressing-room.

"Millie!"

"They've taken Millie!"

"Oh, run for Mr. Forrest!"

"Tell somebody—quick!"

"What's the matter in there?" demanded the young sport, in a loud and authoritative voice.

"The boss canvasman, Rafferty, has run off with Millie in Mr. Forrest's gig," came a hysterical response.

"How long ago?" asked Diamond Dick, Jr.

"Just this minute."

"Which way did the boss canvasman go?"

"We couldn't tell."

Bertie, with Handsome Harry tight at his heels, darted toward the side of the tent.

Just as he lifted the canvas and pushed himself out into the open air, a tremendous explosion came from around in front of the main tent.

Instantly there was a hubbub and confusion which baffled all description.

The spectators in the circus tent, already excited by the events which had taken place there, gave vent to shouts and cries; the animals in the menagerie added to the furore—lions roaring and elephants

trumpeting—while the circus employees, demoralized by the swift succession of surprising events, ran hither and thither in a veritable panic.

"Jumpin' sandhills!" snorted the Serpent of Siskiyou; "we ort ter be in about sixteen places all ter once, Bertie!"

"We can be in two places, all right," young Diamond Dick answered; "you go around in front and see what has happened there, Harry, and I'll do what I can to find out what has become of Millie."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### "THE HIGHFLYER."

Handsome Harry was not long in finding out what had happened in front of the main tent.

Some miscreant had hurled a bomb at the ticket wagon and wrecked it completely.

Several boys and men who had been lounging about the show grounds hurried to the scene, and grouped themselves around the demolished vehicle.

They were standing there, surveying the wreck when Forrest rushed out of the menagerie tent.

The proprietor of the Great Consolidated had halted in the circus tent long enough to pacify the spectators and to get the performance started again in some kind of order.

Then he had made haste to investigate the cause of the explosion.

"Who did this?" he shouted, elbowing his way through the crowd that surrounded the ruined ticket wagon.

A colored boy, dressed in an exaggerated costume which proved his connection with the Great Consolidated, shoved himself forward.

"Jack Martin was de feller, boss," said the moke.

"He frew de bomb—I seed him."

"Martin? Impossible!"

"I's tellin' yo' de troof, Mistah Forrest, yase, suh. Hope tuh die ef I ain't."

"But why should he want to wreck my ticket wagon?"

"Dat's mo' dan I know, boss."

"Myrick must have been killed! Has any one seen Myrick?"

There was no answer from any of the canvasmen or other employees of the show who had been drawn to the scene.

"Slinger," went on Mr. Forrest, "draw a cordon of our men around the wrecked wagon. There must



be twenty-five hundred dollars in the wreck—all the receipts for the afternoon's performance. And Myrick must be in there, too. Form a circle around the wagon and set men to work. Look alive, now. There's no time to be lost. It's evident that this is our Jonah day, and we've got to do our utmost to backcap all this tough luck."

The crowd surrounding the wreck was forced back to a distance of twenty feet and burly canvasmen, armed with tent stakes, were posted at the edge of the circle.

Then Slinger, with the aid of three other employees, went to work pushing and tumbling the wreckage aside.

To the amazement and consternation of the proprietor of the show, not so much as a two-bit piece was found; and if Myrick had been in the wagon at the time of the explosion he must have been blown to atoms, for not a trace of him could be discovered.

"This is the biggest kind of a puzzle," muttered Forrest, wrinkling his brow in perplexity. "I'll give a hundred to the man who'll favor me with a rational solution."

"I don't want your hundred, Mr. Forrest," said a voice at the showman's side, "but I can tell you now that it's a simple case of graft."

"Graft!" echoed the showman, turning upon the speaker. "Ah, is it you, Diamond Dick, Jr.?"

"Yes," returned Bertie. "You're the victim of a gang of crooks, Mr. Forrest."

"I don't see how——"

"Possibly you don't, but I do."

"Gang? Who's in the gang?"

"I'll name two of them—Jack Martin and Ed Myrick."

"No, no, you're 'way off. Martin has an interest in the show, and Myrick has been with me for a year and is straight goods."

"How much of your money did Myrick have in his possession?"

"About \$2,500—all the receipts of the afternoon's performance."

"Do you find any of the money?"

"No."

"Do you see anything of Myrick?"

"Nothing at all."

"Then it's simply a matter of putting two and two together. Myrick is gone and the money is gone.

The ticket seller has touched you for the twenty-five hundred."

The showman gave a gasp, and it was plain that he was beginning to see matters as young Diamond Dick saw them.

"How much of an interest did Jack Martin have in this show?" Bertie went on.

"He had a \$500 interest."

"He helped you out at Las Tablas?"

"Yes; paid our expenses there."

The showman had sunk his voice so that those around him might not learn of his pecuniary embarrassments.

"How did he pay them?" Bertie persisted.

"Why, in money, hard cash," replied Forrest.

"In bills?"

"Yes."

"Of the \$5 variety?"

"That was the way of it. How did you make such a good guess?"

"Oh, the guess came easy," answered the young sport, dryly.

He now knew that Jack Martin had acquired his small interest in the Great Consolidated and shoved five hundred more of his queer, both at the same time.

"It was Martin, son," spoke up Handsome Harry, pushing forward to his little pard's side as he listened to the talk between the youth and the showman, "it was Jack Martin as tossed the bomb that knocked the wagon ter smithereens."

"That fact makes my solution of the problem a regular double-cinch," said Bertie.

"But why was the wagon blown up?" queried Forrest. The showman's hard luck seemed to make him a trifle dense.

"That was done to cover the flight of your ticket agent with the \$2,500, and also to draw attention away from Martin and make it easier for him to escape. If you'll take my advice, Mr. Forrest, you'll set every man you can spare to looking for this Martin. He can't be far away, and I'll bet dollars to doughnuts he's concealed somewhere about these grounds."

"I'll take your advice, Diamond Dick, Jr.," the showman answered. "Will you stand by me? Will you help me out?" He inclined his lips to Bertie's ear and whispered: "If I can't get that \$2,500 back the Great Consolidated will be stranded!"



"I'll do what I can to help you," returned the young sport.

Forrest caught Bertie's hand and gave it a grateful pressure; then he hurried away to have his men take up the search for Martin.

Bertie and Harry withdrew from the crowd.

"Things are comin' at us in bunches, pardy," remarked Handsome Harry.

"That's right," returned the young sport; "everything seems to be happening at once."

"Did you get any track o' the gal?"

"Yes."

"Whar is she?"

"That's more than I can tell. I found this two-spot of clubs lying just outside the women's dressing-room, though, and I can tell you it took quite a load off my mind."

The young sport brought out the card and Handsome Harry read as follows:

"On deck. Will keep my gig-lamps on the giri'erino and put you next the first chance I get. Martin is the main squeeze of the gang of crooks, and Rafferty, boss canvasman, is chief understrapper."

While Handsome Harry was reading the New York kid's memorandum, a yell came from a chariot which stood not more than a hundred yards away.

The chariot had a lot of cheap looking-glass set in its sides, and was surmounted by a gilded figure supposed to represent the Goddess of Liberty.

The shout that startled Bertie and Harry came from within the chariot and was accompanied by sounds indicative of a struggle of some kind.

As the young sport and the old Serpent started toward the chariot, a voice struck upon their ears which they instantly recognized.

"Helup! helup! Come dis vay some vone! I haf got der head crook alretty! I haf got—— Donner und blitzen! Shtop him! Shtop him!"

At that precise moment Jack Martin, stripped of the uniform he had used in the ring and clad in his flashy clothes and white top hat, emerged into sight on top of the chariot and sprang off to the ground, making toward the balloon at a run.

In his left hand he carried a heavy canvas sack which had every appearance of being full of coin; in his right hand he wielded a revolver.

As he dashed for the balloon, he brandished the revolver and called to the little man who stood close to the balloon basket.

"Make ready, LeBrun!! It will be nip-and-tuck if we get out of this."

The great silken bag was expanded to its fullest extent, and was tugging fiercely at the guy ropes.

LeBrun shouted something to a couple of men who acted as his assistants and instantly leaped into the basket.

The aeronaut was dressed in tights, and had been wearing a long cloak over his shoulders.

In order that the cloak might not interfere with his freedom of movement, he cast it aside as he leaped into the car.

His two assistants, obedient to instructions, sprang to the guy ropes.

In a twinkling one of them was cut.

"Keep that man from cutting the other rope!"

It was old Diamond Dick's voice and, just then, the veteran, who had been among the spectators and who had heard the rumpus, appeared, racing toward the basket which Jack Martin had nearly reached.

Whirling about, Martin shot point-blank at Diamond Dick, but the haste with which he fired was not conducive to accuracy and his bullet went wild.

As Handsome Harry was nearest the man who was to cut the remaining guy rope, young Diamond Dick left his old pard to deal with the fellow and raced on after Martin.

Either the old veteran or the young sport might have dropped Martin in his tracks, but each feared to use his revolver on account of the presence of men, women and children who were clustered about the spot where the balloon had been inflated.

Reaching the car, Martin sprang in beside LeBrun.

Diamond Dick was approaching from one side and Bertie from the other, so that they felt tolerably sure of the man they were after.

"Get out of that basket!" commanded the old veteran.

"You'll never get me out of here alive!" roared Martin.

Thereupon he would have used his revolver again had not the young sport sprang into the basket, grabbed him by the collar and jerked him backward.

Meanwhile Handsome Harry had not been having everything his own way, by a long shot.

The edge of the knife, in the hands of LeBrun's assistant, was against the guy rope as the old Serpent sprang at the fellow and knocked him back.

Then the second assistant materialized and made a pass at Harry with his fist.



He was a stout fellow, and Harry had a warm bout for something like two consecutive minutes.

At the end of that length of time Harry knocked the assistant off his pins and whirled to an about face just as the first man, who had recovered from the effects of the blow that had been dealt him, had finished sawing through the rope.

Harry grabbed at the rope, but it ran through his hands as though it had been greased, and he was lifted off his feet and slammed to the ground, flat on his back.

From where he lay he could see the "Highflyer" shooting upward, Bertie, Martin and LeBrun in the basket, and old Diamond Dick hanging onto the rim.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### A HIGH OLD TIME.

Old Diamond Dick had already gripped the edge of the basket preparatory to jumping in, and LeBrun had been making ready to jump out when the second guy rope gave way.

They did not seem to be going up.

To Diamond Dick, who tightened his hold on the edge of the car and gave a hasty look downward, the balloon appeared to be standing still, and the earth to be receding at double the speed of a lightning express.

"Knock that man off the edge of the basket, LeBrun!"

These words, spoken by Jack Martin, had the effect of calling the old veteran back to a realizing sense of his position.

Martin and Bertie were having a struggle on the bottom of the car, Martin seeking desperately to bring his revolver into play.

At the call of his comrade the little Frenchman leaped to where Diamond Dick was hanging and began pounding his hands with his clinched fists.

Bertie, by a superhuman effort, succeeded in freeing his hands from the grip Martin had on them and instantly planted a blow between the grafter's eyes.

Martin was stunned temporarily and the young sport sprang up, caught LeBrun by the shoulders and hurled him upon the form of his pal; then Bertie turned and gave the old veteran what help he needed in getting into the car.

These maneuvers left Martin and LeBrun to their own devices for a brief space, and during that short interval Martin regained his wits and his feet at about the same time.

LeBrun, who was beginning to think he had had enough of the mid-air scrimmage, sprang to the rim of the basket and grabbed a rope that hung down from a queer-looking object attached to the balloon's side.

Then the last scene of this aerial flight was shoved into the grooves.

It was a high old time all around, and lively enough, too, while it lasted.

"Put down that gun!" commanded Diamond Dick, sternly, facing Martin.

"I'll put it down after I send a bullet through you, and not before!" ground out the crook.

With a movement of cat-like swiftness, the old veteran hurled himself upon Martin, catching him by the throat with one hand and by the wrist with the other, and forcing him back over the rim of the basket.

The young sport had given his attention to the Frenchman, who was still perched on the rim.

"Come down into the car!" cried Bertie.

"Nefer," returned the Frenchman; "I haf ze business at anozzer place. *Au revoir! Bon voyage, m'sieu!*"

Then, with a wave of his hand, LeBrun grabbed the dangling rope with both hands and launched himself into space.

Instinctively, young Diamond Dick drew his revolver as he looked downward.

There was a snap as the queer-looking device detached itself from the balloon and for a thousand yards or more LeBrun shot earthward like a lead plummet.

Suddenly, however, his break-neck rush was checked, for the strange device opened out umbrella-wise, and the aeronaut, bobbing about like a cork in a whirlpool, continued his fall at a much slower pace.

The young sport's hair had begun to raise at the sight of a human being recklessly throwing himself into space; but when he realized that LeBrun was simply making a parachute drop he smiled to himself and turned back toward old Diamond Dick and Jack Martin.

Slowly but surely the grafter was being strangled into submission.

With a shake of the hand, the veteran caused Martin to release the revolver, and it went whizzing downward.

A second later Diamond Dick cast the crook to the



floor of the basket, and in almost less time than it takes to tell of it, he was bound hand and foot by means of a coiled rope which hung at the basket side.

"Now," said the veteran, straightening up, "we have a chance to take our bearings and find out where we are."

"We're being carried to the south by a pretty brisk wind," said the young sport.

"So I see," returned Diamond Dick. "We're well to the south of Tough-Nut and approaching the timbered foothills at the base of the Big Chief range of mountains. These hot air balloons do not usually remain up very long."

"It seems as though we had been up more than an hour already."

"Fifteen minutes, I should say," answered old Diamond Dick. "But this strong wind is hustling us along at tremendous speed. A good many things have happened since we shot up into the air, Bertie."

"And a good many things happened before that."

"You had some excitement at the show grounds?"

"Considerable."

"Give me a sketch of what happened."

Bertie complied, and old Diamond Dick listened with frowning brow.

"We can count off four of this gang of crooks without very much trouble," said he. "Myrick, Rafferty and LeBrun are part of Martin's gang. Martin and Myrick put up the job to make off with the ticket money. I shouldn't wonder if Martin had an inkling that we were after him for shoving the queer, and had about made up his mind to skip."

"I suppose that's what Two-Spot meant by his first note saying that Martin intended to make a raise and fly the coop."

"No doubt."

"But why didn't Martin go with Rafferty when the girl was taken?"

"At that time he hadn't secured the money from the ticket wagon. This flight by balloon, I imagine, was not suddenly conceived, but had been planned for some time."

"It's strange to find Martin and Myrick working together. They cannot both be friends and in love with the same girl."

"Millie Mowbray may think a great deal of Myrick, but we do not know that Myrick thinks very much of her."

"Myrick is a first-class scoundrel, as I read his

character," said Bertie, with an ominous flash of the eyes. "He's double-faced, and I'll bet on it."

"Well," returned Diamond Dick, "if we prove him to be one of this gang of circus crooks, Millie will be saved from him."

"I don't know about that. If he really thinks anything of the girl I'm inclined to think that she will stand by him."

"Have you any particulars concerning the abduction?"

"None, except that Rafferty, the boss canvasman, appears to have engineered it, and carried the girl away in a gig belonging to Forrest, the proprietor of the show."

"And it would seem that Two-Spot went along."

"Yes."

"I think we can trust the New York kid, in that event, to look after the girl. It was a fortunate thing that I found myself close to the show grounds at the time Clancy was making for the balloon. I saw him with the canvas sack in one hand and a revolver in the other, and I heard what he called to the aeronaut, so I knew there was something wrong."

"We're going down, Diamond Dick, and right in the timber!"

Bertie had been looking down and he gave his announcement in a startled tone.

"It's likely we'll have a rough landing," commented the old veteran, turning a hasty look about the car. "If we only had a sandbag we could throw over we might lighten the balloon so it would carry us on to a cleared place. I don't fancy coming down in a tree top."

But there were no sandbags to throw over and presently the basket chugged into the topmost branches of an oak with a force that almost threw the Dicks from their feet.

Fortunately, the huge bulk of the balloon did not fall upon the basket, but blew over it and settled into the opposite side of the tree.

"It's up to us to lower ourselves to earth once more and to get our prisoner down," observed Bertie, taking a critical survey of the space beneath. "There is fifty feet of space between us and the ground," he added.

"We're well supplied with ropes," said Diamond Dick, taking a second coil from the basket side. "We'll first lower the prisoner—it will take the two of us to do that—and then we'll make the rope fast and slip down ourselves."



One end of the rope was made secure about Martin's body, under the arms, and he was lifted over the side of the basket and gently lowered.

The rope was just long enough, and no more.

A most unexpected and surprising thing happened when Martin's feet touched ground, and the plans of the Dicks underwent a quick change.

Two men, rushing out from a covert of bushes, slashed in twain the rope by which Martin had been let down, then lifted the grafter and bore him swiftly out of sight.

Both the Dicks had their revolvers in hand, but found it impossible to shoot to advantage.

At the sudden spiriting away of their prisoner, they straightened themselves in the basket and exchanged quick glances which reflected their astonishment.

Then a grim smile curled the veteran's mustached lip.

"Tally one for the flim-flammers," said he.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TREED.

Derisive yells came from the brush to which the flim-flammers had retreated with their rescued leader.

"Do you know who those two fellows were, Bertie?" Diamond Dick asked.

"I don't know, but at a guess I should say they were Myrick and Rafferty. I have never seen either of the two, however."

"Well, whoever they are, they're onto their jobs."

"I wonder how they happened to be over in this direction?"

"They certainly knew that Martin was going to leave the show grounds in the balloon; so these other two, when they fled, came to the south. By watching the wind they could tell pretty closely how the balloon would drift. And then, you know, they would be able to watch it and make directly for the spot where it descended."

"They left Tough-Nut some time before the balloon did, so all they had to do was to lay low in the hills and watch and wait. Just now it looks as though we were treed, Diamond Dick."

"Many a 'coon has been treed and not taken," returned the old veteran, whimsically.

For the Dicks, the element of danger in the situation simply made it interesting.

At that point of the conversation several bullets

whistled through the air and spatted into the boughs of the oak.

"Although they're out of our range," remarked Diamond Dick, "we don't seem to be out of theirs."

"Hello, up there!" shouted the voice of Jack Martin, from cover.

"Hello, yourself," answered Diamond Dick.

"The boot is on the other leg," yelled Martin, with a husky and triumphant laugh.

"It will be back in its original place before this game is ended."

"Bluffing won't do you fellows any good! The Diamond Dicks are good at bluffing—it's their long suit, but it won't go down with us!"

"It went down with Red Ferg," put in young Diamond Dick; "possibly you fellows will remember the circumstance?"

Then Martin ceased his laughing and gave vent to an oath.

"Here's where I even up for Red Ferg," said he.

"Diamond Dick, you and the young sport are my prisoners! Come down from there and bring that money along, or we'll riddle you! Slide down the rope and be pretty blamed *pronto* about it. The money you can throw over."

During this speech Diamond Dick, Jr., looking back toward the bare top of a hill which lay between them and Tough-Nut, saw a sight which made his heart leap.

Two horsemen had topped the rise and they were Handsome Harry and Fritz Dunder!

Pulling at the old veteran's sleeve, Bertie directed his gaze toward Fritz and Harry; then, taking off his hat, the young sport waved it wildly.

The distance was not great and the Dicks were seen and recognized by their pards, who waved their hats in return and came on at a double-quick.

"If we can keep those fellows occupied for a few moments," whispered Diamond Dick, "Harry and Fritz will get here and we shall have everything our own way."

"What you going to do, up there?" shouted the impatient voice of Jack Martin.

"Can't you give us a little time to think the matter over?" returned the veteran.

"Not a minute! You're up against a stone wall this time, and you don't need any time to think the matter over. Will you come down the rope or come down headfirst?"



"We'll come down the rope, but we won't come until we get ready!"

"I'll see about that. Open up on 'em, boys!"

Then the bullets began to fly in a way that was disagreeable, to say the least.

More than one of the leaden missiles plunged into the wickerwork of the basket, sang through the air and chugged into the tree limbs.

But, shooting from below as they were obliged to do, Martin and his pals were banging away at an enemy who, though well within range, was unseen.

And the shooting did the Dicks more good than harm, since it was heard by Harry and Fritz and caused the two to spur their horses to top speed.

"This way, pards!" shouted old Diamond Dick; "Martin and two of his pals are in the brush to the south of this tree. Surround them! Bag all three!"

An answering yell came from Handsome Harry, and this, accompanied as it was by the thumping of two sets of hoofs and a crackling of undergrowth, again turned the tables in favor of the Dicks.

Martin and his pals ceased firing and took to flight, and the old veteran and the young sport slid down the rope, taking the bag of money with them, and joined in the pursuit of the three villains.

The pursuit, however, was in vain, for the crooks disappeared as if by magic.

"Consarn the varmints!" growled Handsome Harry. "I'm blamed sorry ter hev 'em skin out in this hyer fashion, but durned ef I ain't glad ter meet up with you an' Bertie ag'in, Dick! Thunder! Jest think o' me layin' on my back an' watchin' you two sail inter the air with prospects of as purty a fight on yer hands as ye ever went inter! An' thar was me, lookin' on an' never able ter take a hand."

"Und me, likewise und vorse yet," put in the Hot Tamale. "I haf been a deadt headt in der enderprise efer since I foundt dot feller in der shariot vagon, yah, so helup me!"

"You did good work there, Fritz," said Diamond Dick, Jr.

"I did der pest vat I vas aple. Afder I pulled off dot feller's viskers in der circus ring, und heardt vat you yelled down alretty, by shinks oof I didn't get a seddler from dot moo-el! He knocked me my headt ofer und for a liddle vile I vas off der chump und didn't know vedder school took oudt or led in.

"Ven I gome back mit meinseluf like always, I vas roamin' aroundt der show grounds loogin' for a blace vere I could lay down for a liddle und shleep der

kinks out oof my prain. I crawled indo dot shariot vagon und I dought I vas pug house for sure ven I seen dot feller in dere. Den I yelled, und ve had a fight mit ourselves, und den he runned away, und I runned afder him, und den der palloon vent oop, und you fellers vent oop mit id, und den Harry und I chumped onto some horses so ke Vick like noddin, und followed dot palloon, und saw you der tree in vile ve vere der hill on, und so ve gome here. Ach, vat a dime id iss!"

And Fritz fell to rubbing his shoulder.

"Do you know what happened to Two-Spot, Fritz?" asked Diamond Dick.

"I hafn't seen Doo-Shpot since ve choined der show."

"Good reason why, Wienerwurst! I've had my hands full and don't you let that get past your guard for a minute."

The voice broke suddenly from the brush, and the next moment the New York kid stepped into view and confronted his friends.

## CHAPTER VII.

### TWO-SPOT'S DOINGS.

When the New York kid said that he had had his hands full he hadn't overstated the case in the least.

While he and Fritz had not been able to convince Mr. Forrest that they were full-fledged "kinkers," or acrobats, the proprietor of the Great Consolidated saw possibilities for Fritz in riding the trick mule, and for Two-Spot in putting on white paint, a peaked hat and baggy trousers and playing the banjo and singing up-to-date songs.

Fritz, as may be imagined, had the hot end of the work, but thought he could stand it for one performance.

As soon as they were hired, the boys separated and went about the grounds and the tents, keeping their eyes and ears wide open.

Voices coming from the dressing tent attracted Two-Spot and he crept in and got on a pile of canvas behind a trunk belonging to one of the acrobats and listened to two men who were alone in the tent and busily talking.

One of the men wore a white top hat and flashy clothes, and the Bowery boy's heart jumped into his throat when he recognized the fellow as the one who had taken in two and a half of Fritz Dunder's good money and passed out five of the bogus variety.



"You can do the job all right, Rafferty," the man in the loud clothes was saying to his companion.

"I've got to have help, Jack," Rafferty answered; "some one to drive while I take care of the girl. What's the matter with Myrick?"

"He can't help you. He's got to help me make that touch before I fly the coop."

"Or LeBrun?"

"No, no, I'll have to use LeBrun."

"Well, I've got to have somebody, in case the girl's taken off as you propose. You're goin' to have a talk with her, you say?"

"Yes, when she goes into the menagerie tent to look after Lascar and Rajah."

"If she agrees an' goes with ye peaceably——"

"She won't—I can tell you that now. You'll have to use that letter Myrick wrote, for the girl is struck on Myrick and will bite at the bait."

"Then I'll have to have help."

The two men got up and, as fate would have it passed around the trunk where Two-Spot was lying and listening.

The New York kid was clever and he had a mind that worked like lightning, so instead of jumping up and trying to race out of the dressing-tent, he merely sprawled over the canvas and gave a good imitation of a boy asleep.

"I didn't see that kid here when I came in," said Jack Martin.

"He must have been there," returned the boss canvasman; "he certainly didn't come in while we were talkin'."

"Who is he?"

"He's one of the new kids the old man has hired."

"Why wouldn't he do to help you?" queried Martin, quickly. "He looks as though he'd do anything for a ten-dollar bill."

"Wake him up an' let's talk with him."

Martin gave Two-Spot a push with his foot, and had to repeat the push twice and couple it with a kick before the New York kid thought best to open his eyes and give a yawn.

"Wot's eatin' youse?" asked Two-Spot. "Can't youse let a bloke pound his ear widout h'istin' 'im one wid yer kick?"

"Who are you, boy?" asked Martin, failing to remember Two-Spot as the companion of the Dutchman who had been plucked at Ouray.

"Who am I, huh? Well, hold yer breat' an' I'll let it out. I'm Crappsey Cal, de toughest t'ing wot

ever come up de pike, see? I'm four of a kind an' dat's hard ter beat."

"Are you out for the stuff?"

"Dat's de kind of a gameril I am, cull."

"Will you do a job for me?"

"Wot it is?"

"You'll know later."

"Wot I got ter do?"

"Just hang around where the boss canvasamn can get hold of you, along toward the middle of the afternoon's performance."

"How much is dere in it?"

"This now, and twenty more after the job is done, providing you keep a still tongue between your teeth."

Jack Martin tendered Two-Spot one of the bogus fives which he skinned from a big roll fished out of his trousers' pocket.

"Dat's me wid bot' feet!" exclaimed Two-Spot.

"Then see that you're around when needed," went on Martin, as he and Rafferty went out of the dressing-room.

And right there, on the top of the trunk by which he was sitting, the New York kid wrote his first note on the deuce of diamonds and put it in his pocket where it would be handy when the time came to deliver it.

During the row in the menagerie tent, Fritz was off on an errand for Mr. Forrest, and Two-Spot was away at a well toting water for the elephant.

The Bowery boy got back to the grounds with his last pail of water just after the row had quieted down, but he heard all about what had happened from Slinger, the watchman.

Here was a chance for him to deliver his deuce of diamonds and give the young sport a hunch as to the man in the "glad rags."

Two-Spot knew it would not be well for him to be seen talking with the young sport, for that might tip his hand, so he watched at the wall of the menagerie tent, located Handsome Harry and pushed the card through, as we have already seen.

After that, and until the beginning of the show, the New York kid played a waiting game.

He was stationed just outside the women's dressing-room, when the performance began, and Rafferty told him not to budge from the spot, for when he received his call it would be extremely sudden.

So Two-Spot waited.

He heard the commotion in the main tent caused



by Fritz Dunder's bout with the man with the bushy whiskers, but he held to his post.

Suddenly Rafferty dashed up to the dressing-room in a red-wheeled gig, with a top, drawn by a wiry horse which looked as though it might have both bottom and speed.

"Here," cried Rafferty, "jump in here and take these lines. When I come out again and get into the gig I want you to drive like old Ned."

"Keno," said Two-Spot, and climbed up one side of the gig as the boss canvasman got down on the other.

Rafferty had a letter in his hand and he stepped to the flap of the tent door and called aloud for Miss Mowbray.

Millie appeared in her street costume, having finished her work in the ring for that afternoon.

"Here's a letter Mr. Myrick asked me to give ye, Miss Mowbray," said the canvasman, respectfully.

"Ed gave you this?" echoed the girl. "Why did he write a letter when he could step back here and speak a word to me?"

"He's busy in the ticket wagon."

Millie tore open the end of the envelope, drew out the enclosed sheet and read its contents.

"Ed wants me to go with you!" she exclaimed. "Where?"

"To a place where he wants to have a talk with you when he gets through his work."

"What better place could he have than right here?"

"You've got me," answered the canvasman, impatiently; "there's his letter, an' if you don't want to go jest say the word."

"I'll go, of course," said the girl, after a brief pause.

Then, somewhat reluctantly, she climbed into the gig.

"Drive around by the ticket wagon," said she, to Two-Spot; "I'll have a moment's talk with Ed and find out what his reason is for this strange move."

Two-Spot, with the stump of a pencil gripped in the fingers of his right hand, had been writing his second message to Diamond Dick, Jr., with card, pencil and hand all hidden in his jacket pocket.

"All right, miss," said Two-Spot.

"You'll do no such thing," growled Rafferty; "make for the road and drive south as fast as the horse will go."

"Let me out!" cried Millie, seeming suddenly to realize that she was in the hands of her enemies.

"Drive, I tell you!" exclaimed Rafferty, catching Millie about the waist and placing a hand over her mouth; "drive like Sam Hill, kid!"

A scream escaped from the girl, in spite of Rafferty, and several of the women appeared in the door of the dressing-room and saw the gig wheeling rapidly away.

Two-Spot dropped the card to the ground and gave his entire attention to driving.

A plan flashed through his mind to drive the gig right into the thick of the crowd around the place where the balloon was being inflated and call for help to prevent the girl from being carried away.

But this plan was rejected almost as soon as thought of.

Two-Spot was already in the confidence of Martin, and if he acquitted himself well, he would have the grafter's further confidence and could not only rescue the girl but find out who the rest of Martin's confederates were.

So, instead of driving into the crowd, he drove south along the trail and pushed the horse to the utmost.

Although the seat of the gig was wide, there was none too much room for the three of them, especially as Millie was struggling desperately in her attempt to get away.

Gradually the girl's struggles ceased, and Rafferty silenced her with a gag and tied her hands behind her with a silk handkerchief.

Tired out with her futile struggle, the girl resigned herself to her fate and leaned back on the seat of the gig and closed her eyes.

Her face was extremely pale, but she bore up under the ordeal through which she was passing in a way that claimed Two-Spot's admiration.

After they had been a quarter of an hour on the way, and had reached a part of the road that was bordered with a grove of thick timber, Rafferty took the lines out of Two-Spot's hands and turned into a blind trail that led off to the left.

Presently he came to a halt on a ridge overlooking a ravine.

"Wait here," he said, again giving the lines to the boy and springing to the ground. "I'll be back in a minute."



With that, Rafferty pushed out of sight into the underbrush.

"Say, miss," said Two-Spot, speaking hurriedly, "I'm Diamond Dick's pard and your friend, see? I'm playing a game and I left a card back there at the show grounds that will put the young sport next and he'll trail after us. Keep a stiff upper lip. I'm going to stand by you. I'd untie you now or turn this horse and make for town as fast as we've been hurrying away from it, but I want to find out who's helping this geezer work the job he's engaged in. That's what young and old Diamond Dick want to know, understand? Don't fret. I'll take care of you, no matter what happens."

There was a suspicious look on the girl's face when the New York kid began his somewhat disjointed remarks; but the suspicion faded before he had finished, and a pleased and grateful light came into her eyes.

She nodded her head to signify that she understood, and a moment later Rafferty came out of the brush once more.

Going to the horse's head, the boss canvasman caught the bit and led the animal to a tree and hitched it with the halter strap.

"Get out here, Miss Mowbray," said Rafferty, coming up to the side of the gig. "If you don't try to get away you won't be hurt."

The girl got up, and Rafferty helped her to the ground.

"You come with us," the canvasman added, turning to Two-Spot.

The New York kid followed the man and the girl down into the ravine and through the fringe of rank undergrowth to a small log cabin.

As they stood before the cabin, Rafferty cast a quick look upward at the sky and an imprecation escaped his lips.

Two-Spot allowed his eyes to follow Rafferty's and saw the balloon drifting rapidly southward and settling toward the earth.

In the basket of the balloon were two figures, and the New York kid was very positive that one of these was young Diamond Dick.

"Take the girl into the cabin and keep her there until I come back," said Rafferty.

"All right, cull," replied the boy.

The cabin was a ruin, and there was not a stick of furniture inside, and Two-Spot and Millie, when

they found themselves in the one room which the hut contained, hastened to a glassless opening which had once served for a window, and looked out.

Rafferty, his gaze turned skyward and keeping track of the balloon, had hurried to the top of the ridge overlooking the ravine.

Just as he reached the elevation, a slim, well-dressed man ran out of the brush.

As Millie's eyes encountered the second man the boy saw a look of the utmost loathing sweep over her face.

For a second or two the two men watched the balloon, and then, after exchanging a few words, hurried away together.

The moment they were gone, Two-Spot removed the gag from Millie's mouth.

"Who are you?" was the girl's first question.

"Two-Spot Peters," replied the boy.

"And you're a friend of young Diamond Dick's?"

"Well, I guess. I've trotted a good many heats with the son of his dad, and with the old vet, too. But I don't think this is just the time to throw questions at each other, Miss Mowbray. I jollied Rafferty along, and let him bring you out here, hoping we'd connect with some more of the gang; but, from the looks of things, I guess I was shy a few. You saw that balloon, of course?"

"Yes."

"And who was the gazabu in the basket, do you think?"

"It looked to me like young Diamond Dick."

"That's the same sort of a steer my lamps gave me. And here's the swift think I just had: I believe we'd better cut for the place where that balloon came down."

The girl was more than anxious to get away from her enemies just as soon as she could possibly do so, and Two-Spot untied her hands and they quitted the cabin and started up the side of the ravine.

When they reached the ridge, a popping of revolvers reached their ears and Millie paused.

"Oh," she murmured, "I wonder what is going on?"

"I guess you'd better wait around here while I go on and see what kind of a deal the son of his dad is having over there," said the New York kid. "Here, take this; then go into the brush there and don't show yourself until I let off a whistle."

Two-Spot handed her one of his revolvers.



"You won't be gone long?" Millie asked, nervously.

"Just long enough to get the young sport and no longer."

"All right," Millie answered, "I'll stay here. I feel perfectly secure now that I have this weapon."

"You're a regular brick!" exclaimed the Bowery boy, and then started away.

He readily found the spot where the balloon had descended by the noise which was being made in that vicinity.

But when he had reached his friends the three crooks had made their escape, as has already been narrated.

"Geel!" exclaimed Two-Spot as he sized up the Dicks, Harry and Fritz; "I was only lookin' for Bertie and wasn't expecting to connect with the whole push."

"Where's Millie Mowbray, Two-Spot?" asked the young sport.

"She's safe, Bertie. What became of the boss canvasman?"

Old Diamond Dick explained how Rafferty, Martin and the other man had got away.

"What we have got to do now," said Dick, "is to find those three villains."

"It's dollars to dimes," said the New York kid, "that they've headed for the place where Rafferty supposes I'm keeping guard over Millie."

"Then take us thar, Spot," spoke up Handsome Harry, "as quick as the nation'll let ye."

"On the lope," replied Two-Spot, and whirled and started back toward the ravine.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCLUSION.

No sign of the crooks was encountered during the return to the cabin.

The horse and gig were still on the ridge where they had been left by Rafferty, but Millie did not come in answer to Two-Spot's low whistle.

"Wouldn't that upper-cut you?" muttered Two-Spot.

"What are you whistling for?" asked Diamond Dick, Jr.

"Why, for the girlerino."

"Did you leave her here?"

"Sure."

Then the boy explained how they had heard shoot-

ing over to the southward, and he had thought it best to leave the girl there while he went on alone.

"Those villains have hurried back this way, and have found her!" exclaimed the young sport.

"That's not the way I figger it, Bertie," Two-Spot returned. "I let the girl have one of my shooters and if Martin, and his two pals had chased back, I'll bet there would have been some trigger play before the girl allowed herself to be recaptured. And we haven't heard any shooting, have we?"

"Two-Spot is right," put in old Diamond Dick. "We'll go down and have a look at that shanty and if we can get no traces of Martin, or the other two, we'll wait until they show up."

Old Diamond Dick was carrying the sack of money, and he flung it to Handsome Harry and asked him to tie it to his saddle horn; then the veteran and the young sport followed Two-Spot down to the cabin.

There was no one there.

In fact, a careful examination of the tracks in front of the door showed that the cabin had not been visited by any one since Millie and Two-Spot had left.

"Those rascals can't be far away," observed the old veteran, "and inasmuch as they have no reason to suspect Two-Spot, I am of the opinion that they'll show up here, sooner or later. Jack Martin, as Clancy calls himself, wouldn't leave the girl after going to all this trouble to spirit her away."

When they left the hut and started up the side of the ravine, they saw Millie standing beside Handsome Harry's horse.

The girl's face was flushed and she was talking in a low and earnest tone.

As the Dicks and Two-Spot advanced up the slope, Millie turned toward them, her eyes lighting with pleasure as they rested on the young sport.

"You have come to my rescue again," the girl exclaimed, giving her hand to young Diamond Dick.

"I shall be glad to serve you as often as I can," answered Bertie; then he turned and presented the girl to the old veteran.

"I guess you didn't hear that whistle of mine, Miss Mowbray," remarked the New York kid.

"My attention was called in another direction," said Millie. "Ed Myrick, Jack Martin and Jim Rafferty are over there." She waved her hand toward the chaparral on the right of where they were standing.



"They are?" queried old Diamond Dick.

"Yes; they are busily talking, and I crept so close to them that I was able to hear what they said."

A deeper red flushed the girl's cheeks, and she bit her underlip as though what she had overheard had not been of an agreeable nature.

"Will you tell us where those rascals are, Miss Mowbray?" asked Diamond Dick. "They are criminals, and we must take them back to the town."

"I will show you where they are," answered Millie.

Straightway she faced about and made for the chaparral.

Diamond Dick, Bertie, Harry and Two-Spot followed her in single file, the old Serpent throwing his bridle rein to Fritz, who remained to watch the gig and the sack of stolen money, and proceeding on foot.

Presently Millie turned and placed a finger to her lips, signifying that they were close to the place where the crooks were holding their pow-wow.

A moment more and the sound of voices struck on the ears of Dick and his pards, and Millie stepped aside to allow the others to creep close.

The three crooks were seated on a log, talking angrily among themselves.

So wrought up were they that they did not seem to consider the peril they were in from the Dicks, nor to have the remotest idea that any pursuit of them would be attempted.

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Myrick," Jack Martin was saying, as he flashed an ominous look at the ticket seller.

"You needn't fret about my making a fool of myself," Myrick hotly retorted. "You're making fools of Rafferty and me, making us do all the dirty work while you gather in the proceeds."

"That's right," put in Rafferty. "Myrick helped you loot the ticket wagon and I ran off the girl, and what do we get for it? You promised us money—a thousand apiece. I want my share, and I want it now."

"I did more than that," said Myrick, bitterly. "I wrote that letter to Millie and agreed to give her up. That would have been cheap at a thousand dollars, say nothing of helping you loot the ticket wagon."

The young sport was close to Millie, and these fateful words, spoken in such a high key the girl could not help but hear, caused her to waver and then sud-

denly to brace herself and lift the revolver which Two-Spot had given her.

With a firm but gentle hand, young Diamond Dick took the weapon away and slipped it into his pocket.

Millie was beside herself and hardly knew what she was doing.

"Look here," Martin went on, "if you two fellows will go with me to Tombstone, I'll give each of you five thousand in these bogus bills——"

"Confound your bogus bills!" snarled Myrick. "It's good money I want—something I can use anywhere without fear of detection."

"Well," was Martin's grim response, "if you fellows know how to get blood out of a turnip, go ahead."

"We can let a little of your blood, anyhow," cried Rafferty, with an oath.

As the boss canvasman spoke he jerked a revolver from his hip pocket and all three men sprang up.

"Look here, Rafferty," said Jack Martin, slowly, "we three men have got to hang together——"

"We'll hang together, or separately, all right, if we stick to you," ground out Myrick.

"You'll hang quicker if this combine of ours breaks up," went on Martin, his hand under his coat. "I did the best I could to get away with that twenty-five hundred, but the Diamond Dicks were too many for me. I haven't anything but those counterfeit bills to give you, and if you won't take them, and if you won't listen to reason, why, you'll have to do just as you think best."

"Millie is down there at the cabin," said Myrick, "and I'm going to cut loose from you, Martin, and go down there and smooth things over with her."

"If you start for that cabin," gritted Martin, "you'll never get there—nor anywhere else."

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Rafferty.

"I mean that Myrick's light will be snuffed out before he can say Jack Robinson, that's what I mean."

"Bosh!" cried the boss canvasman. "Don't forget that there are two of us against you——"



"No," cut in Martin, "and don't you two forget that I have a gun for each of you!"

Simultaneously with the words, Jack Martin brought both hands from under his coat and showed two six-shooters, one leveled at each of the men in front of him.

There was a dramatic pause.

When the silence was broken it was by Diamond Dick, who called out:

"Throw up your hands, you three!"

Not one of the three crooks dared turn his eyes from the others and look toward old Diamond Dick.

The first shifting of a glance they feared would be the signal for revolver play.

"Throw up your hands, I tell you!" shouted the old veteran in a voice there was no gainsaying. "We have each of you covered, and if your hands are not in the air by the time I count three we'll riddle you!"

The three crooks knew very well that they were in a corner, but still they continued to gaze at each other.

"One!" counted the veteran; "two!"

Before he could voice the last word, three pairs of arms went up in the air.

"Go back to the horses and get a riata, Two-Spot," said Diamond Dick.

"Thar ain't a sign of a rope about them nags Fritz an' I rode out hyer, Dick," said Harry.

"Then get the halter from that horse that's hitched to the gig," went on the old veteran, "and cut off a piece of the lines."

Two-Spot obeyed at once, and was back by the time the Dicks and their old pard had stepped out to the three crooks and disarmed them.

Millie, pale and with flashing eyes, returned to the gig with the New York kid.

While the hands of the three crooks were being tied at their backs they began to realize how their shortsighted bickerings had proved their undoing.

"How did you get out here, Myrick?" Diamond Dick asked.

"Rode one of the show horses," replied the ticket seller, in a sulky voice.

"Where is the animal?"

Myrick nodded toward a clump of bushes and Two-Spot darted into the thicket and quickly returned with the horse.

"I'll ride with that fellow," said the old veteran, and swung himself into the saddle.

Myrick was then made to get up behind him, and Bertie and Harry and Two-Spot marched the other two prisoners back to the gig, the veteran following with the ticket seller.

Millie was seated in the gig and Myrick's face flushed a deep crimson when he saw her.

The girl gave him a stony glance.

"I can prove that I'm not one of this gang, Millie," cried Myrick, in desperation.

"Possibly," answered the girl, in an icy tone, "but you cannot prove that you have not acted the part of a coward and a villain so far as I am concerned. I overheard what you said over there, and your own words have condemned you. I never want to hear your voice or to see your face again."

Myrick hung his head and made no response. He had played a detestable *role* and he knew it.

Handsome Harry took Rafferty up behind him and Fritz had Jack Martin bound to his horse with a rope which was found swinging at Myrick's saddle horn.

Bertie, Millie and Two-Spot rode in the gig, and thus they all returned to town.

Bertie and Millie had quite a talk on the return journey.

For some time after the start there was silence, and then Millie took a letter from her bosom, minced it into a hundred pieces and cast the pieces along the trail side.

"That was the letter Ed Myrick wrote to me—the one delivered by Rafferty," the girl explained.

"The villain!" exclaimed the young sport.

"Ay, a villain he is, Bertie, and the name is mild enough. In the letter he asked me to accompany



Rafferty to a place where he would meet me, when he had finished counting the receipts of the afternoon's performance. I knew his writing, and I don't know why I suspected him, but I did."

"I've had a pretty poor opinion of Myrick ever since you told me that he could do nothing to save you from the machinations of Jack Martin," said Bertie.

"I am beginning to understand the depth of Myrick's perfidy now, and to appreciate all the more what you have done for me, Bertie."

Millie turned her melting eyes upon the young sport.

"I was glad to be of help to you," the young sport answered.

"I am tired of show life," said the girl, with a sigh of weariness, "and I shall leave the Great Consolidated and return to my parents in Denver. After what happened to-day, I should never have the courage to go into the tigers' cage again."

"It would hardly be safe," said the young sport, "even if you had the courage. And you are doing exactly right to leave the show and return to your parents in Denver."

Two-Spot pretended to be asleep, but he was there with them, and perhaps it was just as well.

The young sport was very susceptible of such winsome charms as were Millie's, and he might have said things, under the spell of the moment which his sober reason would have condemned in a later hour.

It was dusk and electric lights were gleaming along the streets of the town when they entered it; and when they turned into the show grounds the flare of gasoline torches at the main entrance revealed their presence to Mr. Forrest.

He ran forward and Harry, at Diamond Dick's direction, unloosened the bag of money and tossed it to the showman.

"What's this?" cried Forrest.

"The money that was stolen from you," replied the old veteran.

A cry of delight and satisfaction fell from the showman's lips.

Pressing close to the old veteran, he whispered:

"You have saved the day for me, sir, you and your friends. The money advanced me by Jack Martin, up at Las Tablas, was counterfeit, and a sheriff has come on here with an attachment. This money will tide me over the trouble and the good business I am doing here, I hope, will set me on my feet again. I cannot thank you gentlemen enough!"

"Then I wouldn't try," said Diamond Dick.

A large amount of bogus \$5 bills was found upon the person of Clancy, otherwise Jack Martin, and also upon the persons of his two pals, Myrick and Rafferty.

These three men were turned over to Government officials and duly tried and sentenced.

The plate from which the bills were printed was believed to be somewhere in Tombstone, but it was never recovered.

Nor was LeBrun, the fourth member of the clique of circus crooks, ever apprehended.

After that drop with the parachute no one ever discovered what had become of him.

He probably realized that his safety lay in flight, and took himself out of the country by the shortest available route.

Forrest took in a large amount of money in Tough-Nut, and when he left the town his finances were in a prosperous condition.

As for Millie, she remained true to her word and severed her connection with the Great Consolidated, taking the first train for Denver.

The Dicks and their friends returned to Ouray, and thus was brought to a successful close their short but stirring campaign against the "circus crooks."

THE END.

The next issue of this Weekly (No. 292) will contain the further experiences of the Diamond Dicks, under the title, "Diamond Dick in the Oil Fields; or, A Lively 'Go' at the Big Gusher." A very lively go it was. Handsome Harry and the young sport got plenty of excitement. A rattling story, boys. Look out for it.



# DO YOU WANT A COMPLETE FISHING ASSORTMENT?

LOOK ON THE BACK COVER OF No. 293 FOR A  
PICTURE AND DESCRIPTION OF ONE. . . . .

If you enter this contest you will have a chance for the finest and most complete assortment of Fishing Tackle ever offered.

## Seven Complete Assortments Given Away.

By winning a prize you can fit yourself out as a dealer in fishing supplies.

The seven boys who send in the seven best contributions in this new . . .

## AMATEUR JOURNALISM CONTEST

will each receive a Famous Fishing Tackle Assortment. Watch for a photograph and description of one on the back cover. Of course you want to own one. Then get into this contest without delay.

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## SEVEN COMPLETE OUTFITS GIVEN AWAY.

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### HERE ARE FULL DIRECTIONS:

Take any incident you can think of. It may be a fire, a runaway, an accident, an adventure, or even a murder. It doesn't matter whether you were there or not. Write it up as graphically as you can, make it full of "action," and send it to us. The article should not be over 500 words in length. The Contest closes September 1st. Send in your stories at once, boys. All the best ones will be published during the progress of the contest. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

Cut out the accompanying Coupon, and send it, with your story, to the DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY, Care of STREET & SMITH, 238 William Street, New York.

No contribution with which a Coupon is not enclosed will be considered.

#### COUPON

Diamond Dick Weekly Amateur Journalism Contest No. 4

Name .....

Street and Number .....

City or Town .....

State .....

Title of Story .....





"Wake up, varmints! Tune yer bazoos fer a new struggle."

The new contest is on in full blast. Make sure that you are not left out of it. There's a chance for everybody—there's a chance for you. Don't let it slip past you. Get right in while the contest is young. Look out for next week's issue. Names of prize-winners in the contest just closed will be announced.

### True Heroism.

(By Frank Graham, Mo.)

There are not many young men who are more heroic than George Bentley, the hero of our story. George lives in a town in the western part of Missouri. Like all other towns, it has its tough characters more or less. One evening, as George was going home from work, about sundown, a sight met his eyes which made him stop short.

Coming up the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street from him was a beautiful young lady. She seemed to be in a hurry, for she was walking rapidly. When she was about even with George she was met by a huge negro as black as the ace of spades.

"Hello, heah, what's yo' hurry, ma purty?" said he, and he placed himself squarely in her road.

"Let me pass, if you please," she replied.

"If I don't please, what then?"

"I shall call some one to my aid."

"Yo' will do no such thing, ma honey. Dar's no one to come if you wuz to."

"Let me pass, I tell you, you villain, don't you know there are police that would hear me?"

"Hub! yo'd bettah not call. I will have two kisses and then yo' kin pass."

At this the girl nearly fainted, but she took two or three steps and tried to pass. The brute caught both her wrists in his huge black hands.

During this time George had stood watching them. He could not understand what they said, but he thought the negro was up to no good, and when he saw the negro catch the girl's wrists his noble nature could stand no more.

He was only twenty years of age, but he was as strong as a young Hercules, and although the negro was a giant, he did not hesitate an instant. With three or four flying leaps, he cleared the distance which separated him from the negro. Neither the girl nor the negro had seen George or heard him coming.

"You black scoundrel," he exclaimed, "I'll teach you how to molest young ladies on the street!"

As the negro turned to see who it was he was met by one of George's fists. It was a blow straight from the

shoulder, and it landed squarely on the negro's jaw. If he had not been so large it would have knocked him down. As it was, it won George half the battle. The negro struck at George with all his force, but George ducked and before the negro could recover he shot out his left and hit him a stunning blow on the side of the head. It had the effect of knocking him down and as he fell his head struck an iron railing on the wall, which stunned him.

About this time two policemen came around the corner below, and seeing the fight they hurried to the scene just as the negro fell. George explained the cause to them, and when the negro came to they took him in custody. He was recognized as a notorious character, who had been wanted a long time. He was sentenced to a term in the penitentiary. George escorted the lady to her home, and she and her father were profuse in their thanks to him and wanted to reward him, but George would not hear of it. This is what we call true heroism.

### The Village Fire.

(By Maurice Asher, Col.)

On a cold night in December the inhabitants of the little village of Elmtown were awakened by the loud clanging of bells from the church belfry which announced that there was a fire.

Heads began to appear from the windows of every house and quickly withdrawn as soon as the whereabouts of the fire became apparent.

It was Squire Haley's house, which was the largest in the village and composed of three stories.

People who were half dressed came rushing to the scene of the conflagration to see if they could lend a hand, but the fire had gained too much headway to be stopped by the insufficient means of extinguishing it.

The people worked like beavers toiling up and down from the well to the house with buckets of water and did not give up till they saw that all their work was useless, then all stopped their work and stood around the burning building, watching the flames as they slowly worked their way to the top floor.

Suddenly there was a piercing scream from the



squire's wife, who had just discovered that her little child, whom she had forgotten in her fright, was still in the house.

Fred Miller, who had heard the cry, without hesitating one instant, ran forward and commenced to climb the ladder which was placed against the window of the child's room.

When the crowd saw this they gave him a warning cry to come back, but Fred, not heeding this advice, continued up the ladder till he reached the room in which the flames were already eating their way. He quickly took the child from its bed where it had been peacefully sleeping and stepped to the ladder.

He was watched by the crowd with breathless interest till he reached the ground, when the emotion of the people gave way and there was hugging and kissing all round.

The following week Fred was presented with a gold medal from the town and a thousand-dollar bill from the grateful squire.

### A Midnight Alarm.

(By E. B. Hinton, Ohio.)

It was a windy night in January about one o'clock in the morning when I was awakened by the cry of fire and people running up the street. I was soon out of bed and at the scene of the fire.

It was an old skating rink in the west end, where the soldiers kept their uniforms, guns, etc. All at once I heard the firing of guns and pistols. And I knew that the fire had reached the storeroom of the soldiers. The firemen tried to put out the fire, but all in vain.

My aunt told me the next day that a bullet struck the window sill at the foot of her bed. The next day the skating rink lay in ruins.

### Farmer Brown's Guest.

(By George Burke, Indiana.)

It was evening; the black, inky clouds had cast a shadow over the earth; a cold, driving rain was falling.

It was on the evening mentioned that Tom Brand was hurriedly walking along a country road. He saw a large farmhouse in the distance, where he intended to seek shelter from the storm.

When he reached the house he inquired if he might stay over night, as he had several miles to travel before he would reach his uncle's home.

The farmer did not seem very willing to keep a stranger over night, but his wife said:

"John, an act of kindness is always rewarded. I think we should give the stranger shelter from the storm."

So he was to spend the night at the farmer's home.

Tom helped the farmer with the chores, and after the evening meal, Tom told them he was an orphan boy and was on his way to pay a short visit to his uncle. When he started on his trip he thought to reach his uncle's home, but the roads were in a bad condition and the storm having arisen he was obliged to ask to spend the night with them.

By this time it was getting late. Tom was shown to his room. The farmer and his wife soon retired, and

everything was quiet, except the howling of the wind and the patter of the rain on the roof.

It was near one o'clock, the rain had ceased, the clouds had disappeared. A masked man could have been seen silently at work at a window. In a short time the window was opened and the robber was in the house.

He glanced quickly around the room, then moved toward the apartment where the farmer and his wife were sleeping. He stopped at the door, took a skeleton key from his pocket and unlocked the door and quietly pushed it open. He quickly made his way to a large chest which was near the door. He had just succeeded in opening the lid of the chest when the farmer awoke and saw the stranger in his room. He grabbed for a pistol which lay on a table near his bed. The robber was on his guard. He quickly drew his revolver, and in another second the farmer would have been murdered.

All of a sudden he was hit a heavy blow from behind, the shot missed its mark, the robber dropped heavily to the floor. He was soon bound hand and foot. It was Tom, who had heard a noise as if some one had entered the house, and seeing the door of the farmer's room open, he quietly but quickly made his way thither. He arrived just in time to save the farmer's life.

On the morrow the prisoner was taken to jail, and it was found that he was a bold and desperate criminal, with several serious charges against him.

As Mr. Brown and his wife had no children, they persuaded Tom to make his home with them. He proved himself a true and noble young man, and was more considerate of his new-found friend's comfort and welfare than some children are for that of their parents. The farmer and his wife never had cause to regret that they took Tom in out of the storm.

### Playing 'Possum.

(By Arthur Whitney, N. Y.)

I was spending the summer in Massachusetts, at a small place called Sheffield. I had been there a little while when I was invited to join a mountain-climbing party that was going to climb one of the wildest mountains.

When we were half way we stopped and rested, but I went on, not knowing that the party had stopped until I came to a small spring, and then I looked around, but as no one was in sight, I stopped and rested.

All at once I saw what I thought a large cat jump out and run toward me, but as it came nearer I saw that it was a large wildcat.

I started to my feet and looked for a tree that I could climb, but there was none in sight, so I thought of something.

People said that if you played dead an animal would not touch you, so I turned over and lay very still.

The animal came up and sniffed around me, and put his paw on me—my heart was in my mouth.

All at once I heard a shout, and knew that the guide had come to my help, the animal gave a snarl and made a leap at the guide, who, as the animal jumped, fired three times at its head.

He came and helped me up, then the rest of the party came up and we went on our way happier that it was no worse, though very much frightened.





## THE MALAY'S GRATITUDE.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

It was a clear day in June, 18—, when a boy of sixteen, wearing a midshipman's uniform, was passing through South Street, New York, on his way to the boat, which was to take him aboard his frigate, the Y—. He was a fine, spirited-looking boy, who could not fail of attracting attention, especially from the gentler sex.

He had nearly gained Fulton Street when his attention was attracted by a crowd gathered near the corner. He then noticed a poor little girl, barefooted and attired in a faded dress, occupying the center of a crowd of rough boys, who were hooting and shouting at the little one. She was a very pretty girl of ten years, although her dark skin and the peculiar expression of her face betokened her to be a Malay.

Perhaps it was the singularity of some parts of her attire that had drawn upon her the ridicule of the boys; for she wore a little hat of braided cocoanut, and a curious string of beads and coral, while about her waist was twined a broad sash of some kind of matting, doubtless obtained from her native isle.

The child was weeping and sobbing, vainly requesting her tormentors to permit her to pass.

Harry Borden, the young midshipman, was a lad of kindly feelings, and it made his blood burn to see the child thus harrassed.

One of the boys was in the act of poking the girl's waist with a sharp stick, when Borden knocked it out of his hand.

"Get out!" he exclaimed, "and let her alone."

"What's it to you?" inquired the other, doubling up his fists.

"Give it to him, Jim!" cried another boy. "I'll back you!"

In a moment half-a-dozen boys rushed toward the young midshipman, headed by the one who had attempted to use the stick.

This fellow Harry promptly knocked down with such a well-directed blow of his fist that the scamp hung back, not caring to meet with a repetition of such treatment.

The others, however, would doubtless have closed around and pummeled the boy badly but for the interposition of several policemen, who now drove the gang off.

The Malay girl then looked at Harry gratefully, and thanked him in broken English for his kindness.

"I had better see you home," said the gallant lad, "as those boys might try to head you off."

She assented, and he conducted her without further trouble to her lodgings in an old sailor boarding-house near James Slip, where she had informed him she was at present staying with her father, who had come to this country on business.

Harry would not stop to go in, as he was in a hurry to reach the boat, the crew of which would not know what had become of him if he remained longer absent. Going along, he thought of the little girl, whose beauty had made upon him a powerful impression, young as he was; and he wondered why she had blushed so when she spoke of her father.

Years passed, and Harry had nearly forgotten the little Malay girl.

He was now a handsome, manly fellow of nineteen, passed midshipman aboard the sloop-of-war Gunther.

One evening as the vessel was booming along through the South Pacific Ocean, on her way to the East Indies, Harry went aloft with a spyglass to look at an island, faintly visible in the distance, about ten miles off the lee bow.

While on the top-gallant yard, a sudden, unexpected squall pounced upon the ship.

Orders were promptly given to take in sail, but ere they could be obeyed, the vessel was down on her beam ends, rushing through the mad waters like an angry bull, with everything cracking and rattling.

The top-gallant sails and royals were at once blown in tatters from the yards, while the jib-boom, snapping short off, hung trailing in the sea.

Meanwhile the shrieking of the wind in the rigging, and the roaring of the vast wilderness of waters made terrific din. When the squall first struck the vessel, Harry had endeavored to get hold of the top-gallant sail, as it was clewed up, to roll it on the yard.

The sail, as explained, however, had burst loose from the jackstay, and blown to pieces.

The young man was about descending, when there



was a crash, as the ship made a tremendous lurch, and away went the top-gallant mast with him upon it.

It was now pitch dark, and Harry, clinging to the mast as it hung down, vainly endeavored to make his situation known to those below, above the roaring of wind and wave.

Soon the spar, swinging violently, struck the main-brace, and the youth was hurled headlong into the angry sea.

He saw the ship's lantern receding fast away from him, and the faint outline of the vessel's huge hull ere she vanished in the darkness.

He shouted instinctively, but the next moment a feeling of despair came over him, for he knew that his cry was not heard aboard the vessel in that raging tempest.

He was an excellent swimmer, but could not hope to keep himself above water many hours.

Something brushed his face as he floated there on the careering seas, and he dimly saw the form of a sea bird go by him.

"I may as well give myself up," he muttered, "and prepare to die like a man."

Even as he spoke, his hand came in contact with something, which he knew by the feeling was the vessel's jib-boom, cut clear by some of the seamen.

He mentally thanked Heaven for this support, and hope revived within him as he clung to it, lashing himself to it by means of the ropes trailing from the spar.

Now, as he drifted on, tossed hither and thither, he heard the mad tempest still screaming in his ears, while the spray flying all over the vast expanse nearly suffocated him.

Anxiously he waited for the abating of the tempest, hoping for a clear moon, which might enable him to see some sign of the Gunther.

Hours passed. The first squall was succeeded by several others, and it was midnight ere the din of their mad career subsided. Then the moon came out from behind the clouds, throwing her radiance, with weird effect, far over the still agitated waters. Harry looked on all sides, as far as he could see, but he beheld no sign of a sail. He was weary, and his tongue parched; the thought of suffering from hunger and thirst made him almost wish he had perished at first, which were better than such a horrible, lingering death as seemed in prospect.

The long hours wore on, and the faint light of dawn stole in the east. There lay a few clouds tinted deeper every moment, with the gorgeous colorings from the rising sun.

The young man watched attentively the beautiful spectacle, which produced upon him in his then situation an effect both weird and strange.

Floating—drifting alone, lashed to a spar on the broad Pacific, his very soul saddened by the vast watery solitude around him. But he raised himself as high as he could on the spar, and looked round him in all directions.

Suddenly a glad cry broke from the weary watcher. Far away he beheld a thin line, which he at once knew to be the mast of some vessel. He pulled out his handkerchief, and, waving it as a signal, knew that he was observed, for soon the vessel headed toward him and came on before a spanking breeze.

Nearer and nearer every moment. But now a shudder

passed through his frame, for there was death in the cut of that vessel's sail.

She was a pirate—a Malay proa—and it had been better for him, he thought, had he not singaled her.

In a short time she came near, a boat was lowered, and the castaway was picked up by a crew of dark, fierce-looking fellows, wearing close-fitting caps, and with knives in red-and-blue sashes around their waists.

They glared fiercely upon him, as they pulled for the proa, and spoke in a language which he could not comprehend. But one of them, tapping the knife at his belt with one hand, drew his finger across the throat with the other, by way of explaining to Harry that he would be killed the moment they should arrive aboard.

Soon they were on deck. The captain, a tall, dark fellow, with black, bloodshot eyes, came and looked Harry savagely in the face.

"English dog!" he said, contemptuously, "you be our slave, or we quick kill."

Harry well knew that to be a slave to such cutthroats was to be kicked and beaten within an inch of his life. He would sooner die than suffer such a slow death, and so he stated in a firm voice.

Meanwhile another person had now come up from the cabin—a beautiful Malay girl, evidently the captain's daughter. On her face was none of the fierceness that animated her father's. Her eyes were large, dark, and soft, and her long hair floated as naturally down her shoulders as the long sea-grass from her native rocks.

"English dog! you have said, and you shall be thrown to the sharks."

He made a sign to several of his fierce men, who, pouncing on the young fellow, threw him down, one of them, while the others held him, about to apply the keen edge of a knife to his throat.

At that moment the Malay girl, who had been attentively surveying the face of the prostrate youth, threw herself between him and the upraised knife.

"No, no," she cried.

Then she said a few hasty words to her father, the captain, in their native tongue.

A look of surprise passed over the man's face; then his features softened.

He spoke quickly to the men, who at once released the prostrate youth.

Harry rose to his feet.

As he did so, the girl, smiling, said:

"You not know me?"

He looked at her steadily, and it occurred to him that he had seen her face before, though where he could not determine.

"You no remember day when you saved poor Moha, then little girl, from boys in the great city?"

He remembered now.

"Is it possible you are that little one?" he exclaimed, surveying with admiration the beautiful, queenly form before him.

"Yes," answered Moha, sadly, and sweetly; "you see me aboard pirate. Me try often to make father no be bad and give up such life, but he no won't."

Here the captain made a gesture of stern impatience and made Moha go into the cabin.

"Yes," he said, fiercely; "me try to give up and go to great city to get work, but you white men all laugh,



at me and give me nothing to do. Then me ship as sailor aboard merchant ship, but the captain beat me worse than I ever beat my own men, so me say me go back and be pirate again. But you been kind to Moha, and me love my child; so me not hurt you. Me put you on island where you soon see ship, and white man take you off."

On the evening of the following day he kept his word.

Harry was put ashore, with plenty of provisions, just as darkness gathered.

The vessel then sailed away, and as it went Harry heard a mournful wail, which he knew came from poor Moha.

Next morning he was picked up by a merchant vessel bound to New York, where he arrived in a few months. But he was destined to see Moha again.

Several years later a number of Malay vessels were captured by a cruiser, aboard which he served. Among the prisoners was Moha, whose father had been killed while fighting against the whites.

The poor girl begged so hard to remain forevermore with Harry that he concluded to educate her and make her his wife.

He did so, and never had cause to regret his marriage with the pirate's daughter.

### A Snaky Adventure.

(By Joe Solomon, Pennsylvania.)

One day last spring, as we were making our way to the river we came across what we thought was a dog fight. We rushed through the underbrush which hid the combatants from view and we met a single creature, which had been the form of a dog, but now it was covered with snakes of all sizes and colors.

We made a detour of the dog and the reptiles, but we came upon more trouble as a long garter snake squirmed out of our path. It was then that we realized our danger.

We had unfortunately entered a den of snakes, the very creatures which had destroyed the milk of the cows in a field near by.

We hastened to tell the owner about our discovery, and armed with clubs we made war on the snakes. We battled and battled for an hour and finally the last snake lay dead at my feet.

The dog had chased a rabbit and it led him into this den of snakes.

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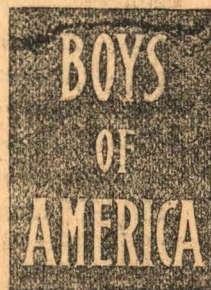
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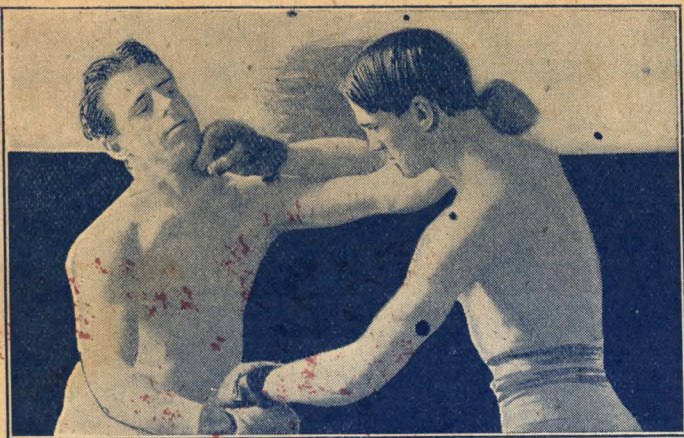
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260—Diamond Dick's Still Hunt Underground; or, the Ghost of the Mine.  
261—Diamond Dick and the Kid-Glove Sport; or, The Fatal Ride to the Lost Mine.  
262—Diamond Dick's Strike at the Gold Mill; or, The New Hand's Secret Deal.  
263—Diamond Dick's Lively Play on the Quiet; or, Diamond Dick Jr.'s Tandem Rescue.  
264—Diamond Dick and the Backers of San Simon; or, A Terrible Prophecy Fulfilled.  
265—Diamond Dick's Rival and the Bogus Troopers; or, The Plot Against the Governor.  
266—Diamond Dick's Anti-Gun Crusade; or, In the Hands of the Poker Flat Swindlers.  
267—Diamond Dick's Helping Hand; or, The Battle of Apache Hill.  
268—Diamond Dick's Play to Win; or, Up Against the Mine Brokers.  
269—Diamond Dick on the Trail of the Smugglers; or, Two-Spot and the Kid from Nowhere.  
270—Diamond Dick and the Brothers of the Bowie; or, The Fight for the Rich "Pocket."  
271—Diamond Dick's Blacklist; or, Branded as Traitors.  
272—Diamond Dick's Railroad Deal; or, The Message from Midnight Pass.  
273—Diamond Dick's Set-to with the Keever Gang; or, The Trouble with No. 7.  
274—Diamond Dick and the Hannibal County Desperadoes; or, Against Judge and Jury.  
275—Diamond Dick's Moonlight Attack; or, The Freight Thieves of the T. N. & P. Railroad.  
276—Diamond Dick's Deadly Charge; or, The Cattle Rustler's Ambush.  
277—Diamond Dick on the Bean Trail; or, Black Bill's Doom.  
278—Diamond Dick in Chicago; or, A Bold Game in the Metropolis.  
279—Diamond Dick's Quick Action; or, The Fastest Fight on Record.  
280—Diamond Dick's Fair Enemy; or, The Plot of the Mexican Girl.  
281—Diamond Dick and the Express Robbers; or, Tornado Kate's Ten Strike.  
282—Diamond Dick's Four of a Kind; or, The Set-to at Secret Pass.  
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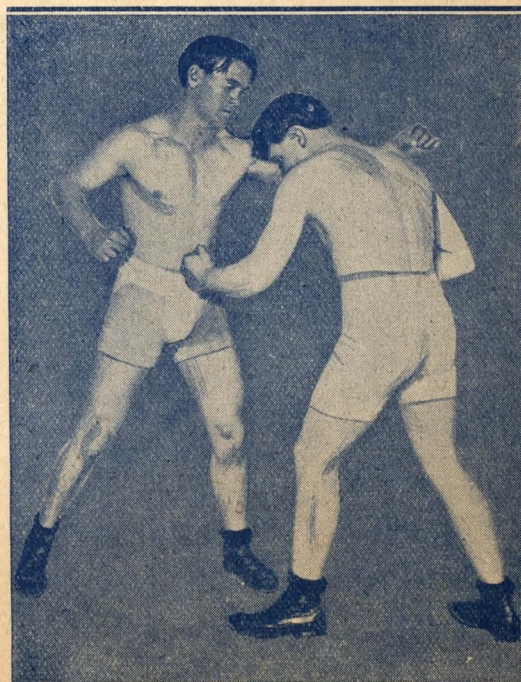
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